

2013-K1385

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to call attention to those historic sites which serve as lasting reminders of our rich and unique past; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is comprised of land that once belonged to George Washington Parke Custis, adopted grandson of George Washington; Mr. Custis built Arlington House on the 1,100-acre plantation as a memorial to the first president; and

WHEREAS, In 1857, Mr. Custis willed the property to his only surviving daughter, Mary Anna Randolph Custis, who was married to Robert E. Lee; after Lee vacated the property on the onset of the Civil War in 1861, federal troops used the land as a camp and headquarters; and

WHEREAS, In 1863, the government established Freedman's Village on the estate as a way to assist slaves transitioning to freedom; the village provided housing, education, employment training, and medical care; and

WHEREAS, A property tax dispute cost the Lee family their home in 1864, and the United States government purchased the property and set aside 200 acres of property to use as a cemetery; the first military burial took place on May 13, 1864, and by the end of the Civil War, thousands of soldiers and former slaves were buried at Arlington; and

WHEREAS, In May of 2014, Arlington National Cemetery hosted a series of events to commemorate this important milestone in Arlington's history, starting with a wreath laying ceremony at the gravesite of Army Private William Christman, who was the first military burial at Arling-

ton and concluded with a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on June 16th, the day Arlington was established as a national cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery consists currently of 624 acres in northeastern Virginia located on the Potomac River across from Washington, D.C. and is the final resting place for more than 400,000 active duty service members, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, Service to country is the common thread which binds all who are remembered and honored at Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is both a national treasure and an active cemetery; the cemetery conducts between 27 to 30 funerals each week day, and between six and eight services on Saturdays, nearly 7,000 per year; and

WHEREAS, This national cemetery hosts more than 3,000 ceremonies per year, including wreath-laying ceremonies for national and international dignitaries; memorial and remembrance services; and services honoring specialized groups, units and historic events and national observances for Memorial Day and Veterans Day; and

WHEREAS, The cornerstone of Arlington National Cemetery's mission is laying our Nation's veterans and their eligible family members to rest with honor and respect, while treating their loved ones with dignity and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Monuments, memorials and dedicated trees commending individuals and commemorating significant events in our Nation's history are interspersed throughout the cemetery among the headstones of those for whom Arlington is the final resting place; they honor service members and events from all branches of the military, as well as pay respect to astronauts, nurses, chaplains, war correspondents and unknowns; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is a living tribute to our Nation's past and how it continues to thrive through the service and sacrifice of those willing to dedicate their lives to its ideals; and

WHEREAS, Those interred in the cemetery include representatives of the dead from all of America's wars, and many of these representatives achieved personal distinction including but not limited to President John F. Kennedy, General John J. Pershing, and Admiral Robert E. Peary; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to commemorate important places and historic events such as the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery as a final resting place and place of honor for those who have served our Nation with honor and dignity; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor all those who are interred at Arlington National Cemetery, and those who perform the daily task of operating the cemetery as a burial place and historic site; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Arlington National Cemetery.