

2015-K1137

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION urging the New York State Congressional delegation to support the Women Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act, S.2437/H.R. 4336

WHEREAS, The federal legislation known as the Women Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act would direct the Department of the Army to ensure that the cremated remains of persons who served as Women's Air Force Service Pilots are eligible for interment in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors; and

WHEREAS, The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were a group of 1,102 women who earned their Silver Wings and who flew non-combat missions during World War II; their missions included ferrying aircraft across the country, training combat pilots, and towing airborne targets for other aircraft; 38 WASP women died during the war; and

WHEREAS, In 1942, General Henry "Hap" Arnold created the WASP unit with the intention of granting them full military status, though

Congress never approved the plan; the program ran from 1942 to 1944; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, Congress passed legislation retroactively granting active duty status to WASP pilots for the purposes of all laws administered by the Veterans Administration (VA); and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Congress awarded the WASP the Congressional Gold Medal; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Arlington National Cemetery, which is operated by the United States Army, approved active duty designees, including WASP pilots, for military honors and inurnments, however, in March 2015, then Secretary of the Army John McHugh reversed this decision; and

WHEREAS, WASP's are eligible to be buried in all the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries including the five VA national cemeteries open for interments in New York: Bath (Bath); Woodlawn (Elmi-

ra); Gerald B. Solomon Saratoga (Schuylerville); Calverton (Calverton); and Long Island (Farmingdale) national cemeteries; and WHEREAS, The National WASP Museum began in 2002 in Sweetwater, Texas; the grand opening was held on May 28th, the same day the first class of WASP graduated 60 years earlier; and

WHEREAS, The Women's Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act (WASP AIR) is endorsed by the Military Officer's Association of America, the Air Force Association, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, the Service Women's Action Network, the Women In International Service (WIIS) and the National Women's Law Center; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the New York State Congressional delegation be and hereby is respectfully memorialized by this Legislative Body to support the passage of the Women Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act, S.2437/H.R. 4336; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the President of the Senate of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each member of the Congressional delegation from New York State.