



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 25-1024

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Winter T. and Story, Lindsay, Armagost, Bacon, Barron, Bird, Boesenecker, Bottoms, Bradfield, Brown, Caldwell, Camacho, Carter, Clifford, DeGraaf, Duran, English, Espenosa, Feret, Froelich, Garcia, Garcia Sander, Gilchrist, Gonzalez R., Hamrick, Jackson, Johnson, Joseph, Keltie, Lieder, Lindstedt, Lukens, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, McCormick, Paschal, Phillips, Pugliese, Richardson, Ricks, Rutinel, Rydin, Sirota, Smith, Stewart K., Stewart R., Suckla, Taggart, Titone, Velasco, Weinberg, Willford, Woodrow, Woog, Zokaie, McCluskie;
also SENATOR(S) Pelton R. and Mullica, Danielson, Hinrichsen, Amabile, Baisley, Ball, Bridges, Bright, Carson, Catlin, Cutter, Daugherty, Exum, Frizell, Gonzales J., Jodeh, Kipp, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Lundeen, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Pelton B., Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Snyder, Sullivan, Wallace, Weissman, Winter F., Coleman.

CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION ON THE STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS OF A MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF THE SAND CREEK MASSACRE OF NOVEMBER 29, 1864.

WHEREAS, Colorado is the traditional homeland of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people; and

WHEREAS, In 1864, bands of Cheyenne and Arapaho people were directed to move to a camping location on Big Sandy Creek, also known as Sand Creek, which was within their ratified treaty lands near present-day Eads, Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Cheyenne and Arapaho Chiefs had engaged in peace talks with the United States government, and the approximately 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho people at Sand Creek, including the camps of Chiefs Black Kettle, White Antelope, and Left Hand, believed that they would not come to harm where they were settled at Sand Creek; and

WHEREAS, On November 29, 1864, as approximately 675 United States Colorado Volunteer soldiers approached the encampment at Sand Creek, Chief Black Kettle raised an American flag and a white flag of peace on a lodge pole, as he had been instructed to by military leaders; and

WHEREAS, Despite assurance to the Cheyenne and Arapaho people that they would be safe under the American flag, and despite the symbols of peace displayed by Chief Black Kettle, United States soldiers from the 1st Colorado Volunteer Cavalry and the 3rd Colorado Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Colonel John Chivington, attacked the encampment at Sand Creek; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Chivington ordered his troops to take no prisoners, killing about 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people, mostly women, children, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, After the massacre, Colonel Chivington and his troops paraded scalps and other mutilated body parts through downtown Denver; and

WHEREAS, Captain Silas Soule of the 1st Colorado Volunteer Cavalry was so disturbed by what he witnessed at Sand Creek that he wrote a letter to his superior that played a pivotal role in investigations led by a military commission, a Special Joint Committee, and the Congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of War, leading to condemnation of the Sand Creek Massacre at all three hearings; and

WHEREAS, The Sand Creek Massacre of November 29, 1864, forever altered the Cheyenne and Arapaho way of life; severely impacted the traditional knowledge, language, social structures, ceremonies, songs, language, and governing councils of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people; and profoundly influenced United States-tribal relations; and

WHEREAS, In 1909, almost 50 years after the Sand Creek Massacre, the state erected and unveiled a monument entitled "On Guard" and commonly known as the "Union Soldier" or the "Civil War monument", dedicated to Colorado soldiers who fought in the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Designed by Captain John D. Howland, a frontier artist and veteran of the Union Army, the Civil War monument consists of a bronze statue of a Civil War soldier standing on a stone base with bronze plaques that reference facts and dates about Colorado Territory and statehood, the names and dates of Colorado soldiers who died in the Civil War, and Colorado's military organizations in the Civil War, including the dates and names of battles and engagements in 1864; and

WHEREAS, For many years, there have been differences in how groups and individuals have interpreted the meaning of the Civil War monument because, although Union cavalry fought and lost their lives to end slavery and famously thwarted Confederate troops at the Battle of Glorieta Pass in New Mexico in 1862, the Civil War monument also includes Sand Creek among the battles and engagements listed on one of its bronze plaques and it memorializes some of the same cavalry units, including those of Colonel Chivington, who perpetrated the Sand Creek Massacre; and

WHEREAS, members of the Colorado General Assembly consulted with tribal leaders and enacted Colorado Senate Joint Resolution 99-017, which added an interpretive plaque to the Civil War monument explaining the mischaracterization of the Sand Creek Massacre as a battle and the struggle of the people of Colorado to interpret and take responsibility for this past; and

WHEREAS, The Civil War monument was severely damaged when, on June 25, 2020, the "Union Soldier" statue was toppled, the statue and base were defaced, and the soldier's saber was stolen; and

WHEREAS, Since the "Union Soldier" statue was toppled, History Colorado has displayed the damaged statue as part of a larger exhibit considering the role of statues in remembering history; and

WHEREAS, There is genuine concern that, if the state returns the "Union Soldier" statue to its original location, it would again be vandalized; and

WHEREAS, The former location of the "Union Soldier" statue on the west grounds of the state capitol is an appropriate location for a memorial of the Sand Creek Massacre to respect and memorialize the Cheyenne and Arapaho people and their ancestors, promote cross-cultural understanding, and educate the public about the massacre and the events surrounding it to foster healing; and

WHEREAS, In the tradition of such educational and interpretive efforts, the National Park Service established, by an act of Congress, the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in 2007 to preserve the massacre site to enhance public awareness and understanding and to assist in preventing similar tragedies from occurring in the future; and

WHEREAS, The Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, the Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma organized the annual Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run in 1999 that begins in Eads, Colorado, and ends on the western steps of the state capitol, to remember what the Cheyenne and Arapaho people endured and to honor those killed; and

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution 17-016 approved the placement of a Sand Creek Massacre memorial on the grounds of the state capitol, pending approval of the final design and specific location; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, the Capitol Building Advisory Committee approved an initial design and recommended that it be placed on the west plaza of the state capitol grounds, but in 2022, the artist withdrew that design from consideration; and

WHEREAS, The Sand Creek Massacre Memorial Committee, which is made up of representatives from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, the Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, artists, a historian, an architectural advisor, a sculptor, and a project manager, recommended a new design for a Sand Creek Massacre memorial that was submitted to the Capitol Building Advisory Committee for review in accordance with state law; and

WHEREAS, On November 25, 2024, the Capitol Building Advisory Committee unanimously approved the new design of the Sand Creek Massacre memorial and recommended that it be placed on the west grounds of the state capitol and, in accordance with state law, submitted the proposal to the Capital Development Committee and the governor for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Development Committee also approved the design and location of the Sand Creek Massacre memorial and, pursuant to legislative custom and practice, requested a Joint Resolution of the general assembly to formalize the approval and location of the Sand Creek Massacre memorial and the long-term loan of the "Union Soldier" to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, acknowledge the devastation caused by the Sand Creek Massacre and seek to raise public awareness about this tragedy and to memorialize the victims of the massacre and honor the Cheyenne and Arapaho people; and

That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, approve of the plan recommended by the State Capitol Building Advisory Committee, the Capital Development Committee, and the governor for the installation of the Sand Creek Massacre memorial on the west grounds of the state capitol and for the long-term loan of the "Union Soldier" statue to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for public display on the department's campus or another appropriate location.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be transmitted to the governor, the State Capitol Building Advisory Committee, the Capital Development Committee, the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation, the Sand Creek Massacre Memorial Committee, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, the Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, History Colorado, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Personnel.

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

James Rashad Coleman Sr.
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Vanessa Reilly
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Esther van Mourik
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE