



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1643

Resolution calling upon the Human Resources Administration to change its rules to allow Public Administrators to act as organizational friends.

By Council Members Fidler, Comrie, Nelson, Palma, Recchia Jr., Seabrook, Weprin and Gerson

Whereas, Veterans provide an invaluable service to the United States of America and its citizens; and

Whereas, To show the respect and gratitude of the country's citizens, veterans who die while not on active duty are entitled to receive burial benefits, which include a gravesite with perpetual care at any of the national cemeteries that have available space, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family; and

Whereas, Veterans of the United States Armed Forces, and their dependents, are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans' Affairs national cemetery provided that the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable; and

Whereas, If an indigent veteran dies in a Veterans' Affairs hospital or under Veterans' Affairs contracted home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the decedent's remains to a national cemetery may be reimbursed; and

Whereas, If an indigent veteran dies outside of a hospital or is not under Veterans' Affairs contracted home care, he or she would not qualify for the transport benefit upon death, which results in some veterans, who are unclaimed at death, failing to be transported to a national veterans cemetery, even though they are eligible to be buried there; and

Whereas, The New York City Human Resources Administration is granted the power by the New York Social Services law to provide for the care, removal and burial of the body of deceased indigent veterans who

die in New York City; and

Whereas, The New York City Human Resources Administration allows either individuals or organizations acting as an organizational friend to apply for funds to cover the burial, including transportation costs, of indigent decedents; and

Whereas, The Office of the Public Administrator frequently administers the estates of indigent deceased, including indigent deceased veterans; and

Whereas, The New York City Human Resources Administration specifically excludes the Office of the Public Administrator from acting as an organizational friend permitted to apply for funds to cover the burial, including transportation costs, of indigent decedents; and

Whereas, Because the Office of the Public Administrator cannot seek funds from the Human Resources Administration, indigent deceased veterans are frequently buried at Hart Island, otherwise known as Potter's Field; and

Whereas, If the Human Resources Administration would allow Public Administrators to act as organizational friends, indigent deceased veterans could be buried in a national cemetery, reflecting the honor owed to them for their sacrifice; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York calls upon the Human Resources Administration to change its rules to allow Public Administrators to act as organizational friends.

OP
LS #5447
9/17/08