

No. R-56. Senate concurrent resolution honoring the Vermont Old Cemetery Association.

(S.C.R.2)

Offered By Senators Weeks, Collamore, Williams, Baruth, Bongartz, Chittenden, Clarkson, Douglass, Gulick, Hardy, Hashim, Ingalls, Lyons, Major, Norris, Perchlik, and Watson,

Offered By All Members of the House,

Whereas, the first known established cemeteries in Vermont are now into their third century serving as a dignified final abode for the deceased, and

Whereas, in 1958, University of Vermont Professor Leon Dean formalized his passion for the State's earliest established cemeteries when he established the Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA), and

Whereas, VOCA offers specific cemetery assistance in the form of financial grants, volunteer labor, and site guidance, and more broadly, the organization educates the public on the centrality of Vermont's long-enduring cemeteries, and

Whereas, the awarding of direct monetary support to local cemetery associations and municipalities began in 1974, with a modest \$25.00 donation to the Town of Halifax, and since then, the organization has issued over \$60,000.00 in financial grants for the restoration of old cemeteries, and

Whereas, hundreds of old Vermont cemeteries have benefited from VOCA's volunteer guidance and restoration services that bring a new beauty and serenity to these cemeteries, and these grants save local cemetery associations and municipalities expenses that might otherwise not be affordable, and

Whereas, VOCA is especially focused on the dignity of veterans' burials through spearheading the enactment of laws ensuring their respectful interment, replacing damaged monuments, and establishing new ones for those veterans who were never properly honored, and

Whereas, as a publisher, VOCA's informative quarterly newsletter presents preservation advice and cemetery law updates; the organization's book, *Burial Grounds of Vermont*, is a comprehensive resource for the history and status of most Vermont cemeteries; and its school course guide, *Stones and Bones*, is a great resource for incorporating our State's old cemeteries into a school's Vermont history curriculum, and

Whereas, VOCA has served as a model for similar cemetery restoration initiatives in other states, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the Vermont Old Cemetery Association, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Old Cemetery Association.