

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9—SENATORS RAWSON, AMODEI, CARE, CARLTON, COFFIN, JACOBSEN, JAMES, MATHEWS, MCGINNESS, NEAL, O’CONNELL, O’DONNELL, PORTER, RAGGIO, RHOADS, SCHNEIDER, SHAFFER, TITUS, TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON AND WIENER

MARCH 15, 2001

JOINT SPONSORS: ASSEMBLYMEN BROWN, ANDERSON, ANGLE, ARBERRY, BACHE, BEERS, BERMAN, BROWER, BUCKLEY, CARPENTER, CEGAVSKE, CHOWNING, CLABORN, COLLINS, DE BRAGA, DINI, FREEMAN, GIBBONS, GIUNCHIGLIANI, GOLDWATER, GUSTAVSON, HETTRICK, HUMKE, KOIVISTO, LEE, LESLIE, MANENDO, MARVEL, MCCLAIN, MORTENSON, NEIGHBORS, NOLAN, OCEGUERA, OHRENSCHALL, PARKS, PARNELL, PERKINS, PRICE, SMITH, TIFFANY, VON TOBEL AND WILLIAMS

Declared an Emergency Measure

SUMMARY—Urges Congress to declare crash site near summit of Mount Charleston as “Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Monument.” (BDR R-1229)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.  
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to declare the 1955 crash site of a United States Air Force C-54 near the summit of Mount Charleston as the “Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Monument.”

- 1 WHEREAS, While hiking to the summit of Mount Charleston in 1998,
- 2 Steve Ririe stopped near the debris of a mysterious plane crash that had
- 3 stirred his curiosity as a Boy Scout during hikes many years before and,
- 4 this time, the deep reverence he felt started him on the journey that would
- 5 uncover the names and the story of the people who died on this lonely
- 6 mountain; and
- 7 WHEREAS, The story began over 40 years earlier during a tense time of
- 8 the “Cold War” following World War II when the reality of the atomic
- 9 bomb made the United States aware of the desperate need for a more
- 10 reliable reconnaissance plane that could assess the offensive capabilities



1 and target the most dangerous missile assets of Russia's new military  
2 muscle, and so the project to develop the U-2 was born; and

3 WHEREAS, The DC-4 with the military designation of C-54 and known  
4 as USAF 9068 was routinely assigned to carry scientific and technical  
5 personnel to the secret Area 51, known at this time as "Watertown," to  
6 develop the plane that was unknown to most citizens of the United States  
7 until one was shot down over Russian territory on May 1, 1960, resulting  
8 in the capture of its pilot, Francis Gary Powers; and

9 WHEREAS, On November 17, 1955, the C-54 left the Lockheed "Skunk  
10 Works" in Burbank, California, for the Military Air Transport Service  
11 flight to "Watertown," beginning the 18th round trip in the past 30 days for  
12 Pilot George Manual Pappas, Jr., Co-Pilot Paul Eugene Winham, Flight  
13 Mechanic Technician Clayton D. Farris and Flight Attendant Guy R.  
14 Fasolas; and

15 WHEREAS, Flying by the pilot's sight and instruments alone, to avoid  
16 any possible leak about its secret destination, on a new route that would cut  
17 10 minutes off the total flight time, the C-54 was blown off course by a  
18 severe storm front; and

19 WHEREAS, While lost in the clouds, an error in the assumed position of  
20 the aircraft in relation to the Spring Mountain range resulted in the crash at  
21 mere 50 feet below the crest of an 11,300-foot ridge leading to the peak of  
22 Mount Charleston which instantly took the lives of the four crewmen and  
23 10 civilians on board; and

24 WHEREAS, As news of the crash reached Las Vegas, the Air Force  
25 released the names of the victims, closed the road into Kyle Canyon,  
26 notified the families, who were told only that it had happened on a business  
27 trip, and told the media the plane was headed for Indian Springs; and

28 WHEREAS, Because of the classified nature of the project that would  
29 develop a plane essential to our national security, it would take over 40  
30 years for the truth regarding the "Lost Bird" to be released and the  
31 curiosity and dedicated efforts of Steve Ririe to bring the details of the  
32 crash to light; and

33 WHEREAS, Those who worked so hard in secrecy for the good of our  
34 country, on an aircraft that some people believe prevented World War III,  
35 were finally given the honor due them in 1998 when the U-2 project  
36 received the Collier Trophy from the National Aeronautics Association for  
37 the advancement of aeronautic technology; and

38 WHEREAS, The men aboard the ill-fated C-54 helped build the plane  
39 which critics said could never be built and which is still a functional and  
40 vital part of our reconnaissance force today and paid for that contribution  
41 with their lives; now, therefore, be it

42 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA,  
43 JOINTLY, That the men aboard the C-54 that crashed on Mount Charleston  
44 on November 17, 1955, George Manual Pappas Jr., Paul Eugene Winham,  
45 Clayton D. Farris, Guy R. Fasolas, John H. Gains, Edwin J. Urolatis, James  
46 W. Brown, William H. Marr, James F. Bray, Rodney H. Kreimendahl,  
47 Terence J. O'Donnell, Fred F. Hanks, Harold C. Silent and Richard J.  
48 Hrudá, will long be remembered for their contribution to our national  
49 security which cost them their lives; and be it further



1       RESOLVED, That the Nevada Legislature hereby urges Congress to  
2 declare the crash site of United States Air Force 9068 near the summit of  
3 Mount Charleston as the “Silent Heroes of the Cold War National  
4 Monument”; and be it further

5       RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy  
6 of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States as the presiding  
7 officer of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each  
8 member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation and Steve Ririe; and be it  
9 further

10       RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

