

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

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, Ocegüera, Ohrenschall, Parks, Parnell, Perkins, Price, Smith, Tiffany, Von Tobel and Williams

FILE NUMBER.....

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.”

WHEREAS, While hiking to the summit of Mount Charleston in 1998, Steve Ririe stopped near the debris of a mysterious plane crash that had stirred his curiosity as a Boy Scout during hikes many years before and, this time, the deep reverence he felt started him on the journey that would uncover the names and the story of the people who died on this lonely mountain; and

WHEREAS, The story began over 40 years earlier during a tense time of the “Cold War” following World War II when the reality of the atomic bomb made the United States aware of the desperate need for a more reliable reconnaissance plane that could assess the offensive capabilities and target the most dangerous missile assets of Russia’s new military muscle, and so the project to develop the U-2 was born; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.