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THE COUNCIL OF
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May 18, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
US Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

I am writing to advocate for allowing flag placement on Memorial Day next week at Cypress Hills National Cemetery, New York City's sole national cemetery.

This year marks an enormous milestone: the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II. The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially difficult and dangerous for members of the American generation that can still remember the war. It is always important that we pay respects to our fallen heroes, and I believe especially so in the midst of yet another challenge our nation faces.

I am therefore concerned by the National Cemetery Administration's decision to suspend flag placement at national cemeteries due to health risks posed by COVID-19. I believe that cemeteries are capable of planning and implementing safe flag placement practices that allow us to honor our fallen heroes without endangering our own health and safety. New York City stands ready to aid its national cemetery in accomplishing this, and I believe other localities can do the same for theirs.

Our fallen heroes rose up to protect us in the midst of national crises. We have a chance to rise, in a smaller way, to honor them, and we can do it safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Brannan".

*Councilman Justin Brannan, 43rd District
Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach, and Bensonhurst*