

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2551

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in Sarpy County, Nebraska, to serve veterans in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2007

Mr. TERRY (for himself, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in Sarpy County, Nebraska, to serve veterans in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Congress strongly supports providing every
6 honorably discharged veteran the opportunity to be
7 buried in a national veterans cemetery in recognition

1 of their sacrifices for the freedoms enjoyed by every
2 United States citizen;

3 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs has de-
4 termined that a population threshold of 170,000 eli-
5 gible people living within a 75-mile service radius is
6 appropriate to merit the establishment of a new na-
7 tional cemetery in areas of greatest need nationwide.

8 (3) Although the Department of Veterans Af-
9 fairs estimates a projected veterans population of
10 133,000 within a 75-mile radius of the city of Belle-
11 vue, Nebraska, an independent analysis conducted
12 by the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency located
13 in Omaha, Nebraska, concluded that 172,500 people
14 who reside within a 75-mile radius of Bellevue would
15 be eligible to be buried in a national cemetery.

16 (4) Congress has consistently authorized the
17 construction of six new national cemeteries every
18 four years since 1999, with the first six established
19 by the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Bene-
20 fits Act (Public Law 106–117) and the next six es-
21 tablished by the National Cemetery Expansion Act
22 of 2003 (Public Law 108–109).

23 (5) The 2002 independent “Future Burial
24 Needs” report completed for the Department of Vet-
25 erans Affairs pursuant to section 613 of the Vet-

1 erans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act rec-
2 ommended Omaha, Nebraska as a location for a new
3 national cemetery to be built in 2005.

4 (6) The Midwest Health Care Network of the
5 Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible
6 for the provision of health care for veterans residing
7 in Iowa and Nebraska, currently serves a high popu-
8 lation of aging veterans.

9 (7) Major veterans and military advocacy orga-
10 nizations endorse the establishment of a national
11 cemetery to serve veterans and their family members
12 in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, including the
13 Nebraska Department of Disabled American Vet-
14 erans, the Heartland of America Chapter of the
15 Military Officers Association of America, the Great
16 Plains Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America,
17 the Nebraska Department of Veterans of Foreign
18 Wars, the Nebraska chapter of Vietnam Veterans of
19 America, the Nebraska Military Order of the Purple
20 Heart, the Nebraska State Air Force Association,
21 the Air Force Sergeants Association, Chapter 984,
22 the Nebraska Department of the American Legion,
23 the Forty & Eight Charitable Veterans, the Ne-
24 braska chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of
25 War, the Nebraska chapter of Gold Star Wives, the

1 Korean War Veterans Association, Nebraska Chap-
2 ter 1, the Marine Corps League in Nebraska, and
3 the Nebraska Department of American Veterans.

4 (8) Such organizations represent a combined
5 membership of at least 85,700 veterans and military
6 advocates in the State of Nebraska.

7 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEMETERY IN**
8 **SARPY COUNTY, NEBRASKA.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
10 shall establish, in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38,
11 United States Code, a national cemetery in Sarpy County,
12 Nebraska, to serve the needs of veterans and their families
13 in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

14 (b) CONSULTATION IN SELECTION OF SITE.—Before
15 selecting the site for the national cemetery established
16 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

17 (1) appropriate officials of the State of Ne-
18 braska and local officials in Sarpy County, Ne-
19 braska; and

20 (2) appropriate officials of the United States,
21 including the Administrator of General Services,
22 with respect to land belonging to the United States
23 in that region that would be suitable to establish the
24 national cemetery under subsection (a).

1 (c) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT DONATION OF PARCEL
2 OF LAND.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
4 Affairs may accept on behalf of the United States
5 the gift of an appropriate parcel of real property.
6 The Secretary shall have administrative jurisdiction
7 over such parcel of real property, and shall use such
8 parcel to establish the national cemetery under sub-
9 section (a).

10 (2) INCOME TAX TREATMENT OF GIFT.—For
11 purposes of Federal income, estate, and gift taxes,
12 the real property accepted under paragraph (1) shall
13 be considered as a gift to the United States.

14 (d) REPORT.—As soon as practicable after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
16 to Congress a report on the establishment of the national
17 cemetery under subsection (a). The report shall set forth
18 a schedule for such establishment and an estimate of the
19 costs associated with such establishment.

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