

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2701

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 4, 2008

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

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

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 makes the following findings:

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 citizen of the United States.

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 section 611 of the Veterans Millennium Health
20 Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106–117; 38
21 U.S.C. 2400 note) and the next six established by
22 the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003 (Pub-
23 lic Law 108–109; 38 U.S.C. 2400 note).

24 (5) The independent report titled “Future Bur-
25 ial Needs” and completed for the Department of

1 Veterans Affairs in 2002 pursuant to section 613 of
2 the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits
3 Act (Public Law 106–117; 38 U.S.C. 2404 note)
4 recommended Omaha, Nebraska, as a location for a
5 new national cemetery to be built in 2005.

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

11 (7) Major veterans and military advocacy orga-
12 nizations endorse the establishment of a national
13 cemetery to serve veterans and their family members
14 in the eastern Nebraska and western Iowa regions,
15 including the following:

16 (A) The Nebraska Department of Disabled
17 American Veterans.

18 (B) The Heartland of America Chapter of
19 the Military Officers Association of America.

20 (C) The Great Plains Chapter of Paralyzed
21 Veterans of America.

22 (D) The Nebraska Department of Veterans
23 of Foreign Wars.

24 (E) The Nebraska chapter of Vietnam Vet-
25 erans of America.

1 (F) The Nebraska Military Order of the
2 Purple Heart.

3 (G) The Nebraska State Air Force Asso-
4 ciation.

5 (H) The Air Force Sergeants Association,
6 Chapter 984.

7 (I) The Nebraska Department of the
8 American Legion.

9 (J) The Forty & Eight Charitable Vet-
10 erans.

11 (K) The Nebraska chapter of the American
12 Ex-Prisoners of War.

13 (L) The Nebraska chapter of Gold Star
14 Wives.

15 (M) The Korean War Veterans Associa-
16 tion, Nebraska Chapter 1.

17 (N) The Marine Corps League in Ne-
18 braska.

19 (O) The Nebraska Department of Amer-
20 ican Veterans.

21 (8) Such organizations represent a combined
22 membership of not less than 85,700 veterans and
23 military advocates in the State of Nebraska.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEMETERY IN EAST-**
 2 **ERN NEBRASKA REGION.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
 4 shall establish, in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38,
 5 United States Code, a national cemetery in the eastern
 6 Nebraska region to serve the needs of veterans and their
 7 families in the eastern Nebraska and western Iowa re-
 8 gions.

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

12 (1) appropriate officials of the State of Ne-
 13 braska and local officials in the eastern Nebraska re-
 14 gion; and

15 (2) appropriate officials of the United States,
 16 including the Administrator of General Services,
 17 with respect to land belonging to the United States
 18 in that region that would be suitable to establish the
 19 national cemetery under subsection (a).

20 (c) REPORT.—As soon as practicable after the date
 21 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
 22 to Congress a report on the establishment of the national
 23 cemetery under subsection (a). The report shall set forth
 24 a schedule for such establishment and an estimate of the
 25 costs associated with such establishment.