



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TO URGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROVIDE FREE BURIAL OF SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS OF VETERANS AT ALL VETERAN CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, in 1862 President Lincoln signed into law language that created the first National Cemeteries for Civil War soldiers who died while in service to the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1867 Congress provided guidelines for the construction of cemeteries and for the eligibility of those who can be buried in the national cemeteries free of charge; and

WHEREAS, between 1867 and the 1970s the act was expanded several times to include honorably discharged members of the Army, Navy, and Marines who died in a destitute condition, soldiers who died on foreign soil, U.S. citizens who served in the armed forces of any country at war with Germany or Austria during World War I, members of the reserve components of the armed forces, and any member of the National Guard; and

WHEREAS, in 1978 the Department of Veterans Affairs created the Veteran Cemetery Grants Program that assisted states, territories, and federally recognized tribal governments in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs; and

WHEREAS, a surviving spouse and dependent or minor child of an eligible veteran or armed forces member also may be buried in a national cemetery at no charge; and

WHEREAS, states, territories, and tribal governments may impose additional requirements more stringent than those required by federal law; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration is authorized to reimburse a "plot allowance" to states for expenses incurred in the burial of certain veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration does not provide reimbursement for the burial of a surviving spouse and dependents or minor children of an eligible veteran not buried in national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, since 1862 more than 3.8 million burials have taken place at the 133 national cemeteries, 33 soldiers' government lots, and Confederate lots containing more than 20,000 acres; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners that Cook County shall urge the United States Congress to fund the expenses of burial of spouses and dependents of veterans at cemeteries that are operated by state, territorial, and tribal governments and that receive funds from the Veteran Cemetery Grants Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to be presented to the members of the Illinois delegation of the U.S. Congress.

