

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a new national cemetery in the State of Hawai‘i, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Ms. HIRONO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a new national cemetery in the State of Hawai‘i, and for other purposes.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Hawai‘i National Cem-  
5       etery Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

8               (1) Veterans, members of the Armed Forces,  
9       spouses, and dependents may be eligible for burial in  
10      a national cemetery pursuant to regulations pre-

1       scribed under section 2402 of title 38, United States  
2       Code.

3           (2) As part of the National Cemetery Adminis-  
4       tration's strategic goals, the Secretary of Veterans  
5       Affairs seeks to ensure that 95 percent of veterans  
6       live within 75 miles of a national, State, or Tribal  
7       veterans cemetery.

8           (3) The National Cemetery Administration's  
9       Long Range Plan, as detailed in the budget submis-  
10      sion of the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal  
11      year 2026, sets goals that seek to improve burial  
12      benefits, including the following:

13           (A) Veterans and eligible family members  
14      will have increased access to burial benefits.

15           (B) More veterans and eligible family  
16      members will use such burial and memorial  
17      benefits.

18           (C) Veterans will be memorialized through  
19      enhanced tributes befitting their service and  
20      sacrifice to the Nation.

21           (D) Stakeholders will place greater trust in  
22      the National Cemetery Administration based on  
23      enhanced accountability.

1 (E) Stakeholders will be served more effi-  
2 ciently and effectively by internal capacity of  
3 the National Cemetery Administration.

4 (4) The goals described in paragraph (3) do not  
5 account for veterans in Hawai'i who prefer to be  
6 buried in a national cemetery even if other options  
7 exist. Hawai'i's only national cemetery, the National  
8 Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, has been essen-  
9 tially closed to casketed burials since 1991 and will  
10 stop accepting cremated remains by 2036. Should a  
11 veteran in Hawai'i prefer an inground burial in a  
12 national cemetery, they are forced to select a ceme-  
13 tery at least 2,500 miles away. This distance can  
14 create significant financial and logistical burdens  
15 compared to veterans in the continental United  
16 States, as air travel that is often cost-prohibitive is  
17 required for casket transportation and visitation.

18 (5) To maintain equitable access to burial bene-  
19 fits in a national cemetery for veterans residing in  
20 Hawai'i, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs must ini-  
21 tiate the construction of a new national cemetery in  
22 Hawai'i to supplement the remaining columbarium  
23 space at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pa-  
24 cific. The work should begin immediately, as devel-  
25 oping a new national cemetery must pass through

1        six phases and such a cemetery can take more than  
2        eight years to construct.

3            (6) While Hawai'i is home to many great State  
4        veterans' cemeteries, establishment of a new national  
5        cemetery would align with the National Cemetery  
6        Administration's access goals and increase options  
7        for veterans and other beneficiaries in the Pacific.

8        **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW NATIONAL CEMETERY IN**  
9            **THE STATE OF HAWAII.**

10        (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—In accordance with chapter  
11        24 of title 38, United States Code, and the National Envi-  
12        ronmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.),  
13        the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a new na-  
14        tional cemetery in the State of Hawai'i.

15        (b) SITE SELECTION.—In selecting a location for the  
16        national cemetery described in subsection (a), the Sec-  
17        retary shall—

18            (1) give priority to a location that—

19                    (A) is near population centers;

20                    (B) is accessible by existing modes of  
21        transportation; and

22                    (C) minimizes environmental impact; and

23        (2) consult with—

24                    (A) the Governor of Hawai'i;

1 (B) local representatives of veterans serv-  
2 ice organizations; and

3 (C) other entities the Secretary determines  
4 appropriate.

5 (c) REPORTS.—

6 (1) POTENTIAL SITES.—Not later than one  
7 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
8 Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
9 sional committees a report identifying sites that the  
10 Secretary determines appropriate for the national  
11 cemetery described in subsection (a).

12 (2) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than two  
13 years after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
14 and annually thereafter until the national cemetery  
15 described in subsection (a) is operational, the Sec-  
16 retary shall submit to the appropriate congressional  
17 committees a report regarding the establishment of  
18 such national cemetery, including progress regarding  
19 the following elements:

20 (A) Site selection.

21 (B) Environmental impact assessment.

22 (C) Land acquisition.

23 (D) Master planning and design develop-  
24 ment.

1                   (E) Preparation of construction docu-  
2                   ments.

3                   (F) Award of construction contracts.

4                   (G) Completion of construction.

5                   (H) Beginning of operations.

6           (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

7   DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-  
8   gressional committees” means—

9                   (1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the  
10                  Senate; and

11                  (2) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the  
12                  House of Representatives.