

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON H.B. 1943, RELATING TO VETERAN
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS, & MILITARY
AFFAIRS

February 2, 2010

Good afternoon Chair Angus McKelvey, Vice-Chair Isaac Choy, and members of the Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business, & and Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to support HB 1943, which requires the director of the office of veterans' services to act on behalf of deceased veterans found to be indigent at the time of death and without surviving immediate family members to ensure the burial of the veteran's remains in a state veterans cemetery

This issue has come to our attention and we believe it must be addressed, using Federal funds available for burial or inurnment in a veteran's cemetery. As veterans' age and the number of World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and those who participated in the Global War on Terrorism spend their final days alone their remains are discovered in their residence or elsewhere. In some cases there are family members who are willing to sign documents allowing for either cremation or burial, however, our experience has been that there is a significant number of veterans without family who require assistance from OVS to make their final arrangements.

Our goal is to assure that each veteran who is entitled to military honors and placement in a veteran's cemetery receives these appropriate services.

We request that the committee change the wording of the bill to include cremation services and burial or inurnment in a veteran's cemetery.

The OVS support this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Years 2010-2011.

Thank you for allowing me to present the Veterans' perspective on this issue. I will respond to any questions.