

SB 2139

Measure Title:
RELATING TO VETERANS

Report Title:
Veterans Rights and Benefits; Burial

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 2139, RELATING TO VETERAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

January 26, 2010

Good afternoon Chair Will Espero, Vice-Chair Robert Bunda, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to support SB 2139, 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. 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.

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