

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 2139 SD1, RELATING TO VETERAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 22, 2010

Good afternoon Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice-Chair Shan Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to strongly support SB 2139 SD1, 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 or cremation and interment 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. There is no need for funding, as the veterans' cemetery will receive reimbursement from the Federal Government.

We ask the committee to add the words "or inurnment" after interment. Inurnment is appropriate for cremated remains.

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.

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