

By Senator King

8-1735A-02

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

Senate Resolution No. ____

A resolution urging the President and Congress of the United States to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in Duval County, Florida, to serve the needs of veterans and their families in northeast Florida and southeast Georgia.

WHEREAS, veteran deaths are increasing each year, especially as veterans of the World War II and Korean War era continue to advance in age, resulting in a corresponding increase in the demand of burial services in national cemeteries, and

WHEREAS, based on 1990 national census data, annual veteran deaths are not expected to peak until the year 2008 before beginning a possible decline, and during the next decade annual deaths are expected to increase 10.5 percent from a total of 561,000 in 1999 to 620,000 in 2008, notwithstanding any future national emergencies, and

WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, one out of every ten veterans who die in the United States is a resident of Florida at the time of interment, and

WHEREAS, Florida has the second-largest population of veterans, totaling 1.7 million, with more than 6,500 veterans and family members being laid to rest at Bushnell and Bay Pines national cemeteries in the year 2000, and

WHEREAS, Florida's two smaller national cemeteries, at Pensacola and St. Augustine, have reached capacity and are already closed, and

1 WHEREAS, South Florida was recently awarded a national
2 cemetery following nearly 14 years of being identified as a
3 geographic area in which the need for burial space for
4 veterans was greatest, and

5 WHEREAS, Governor Jeb Bush praised the efforts of the
6 Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs in helping secure
7 federal funding and raising the awareness of the need for a
8 national cemetery in South Florida, and

9 WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration considers
10 the burial needs of veterans to be met for those veterans that
11 have reasonable access to a burial option, meaning that a
12 first interment option in a national or state veterans'
13 cemetery is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place
14 of residence, and

15 WHEREAS, the nearest open national cemeteries serving
16 northeast Florida and southeast Georgia veterans are located
17 in Bushnell, Florida, a distance of 150 miles, and Marietta,
18 Georgia, a distance of 365 miles, and

19 WHEREAS, according to the National Cemetery
20 Administration, the development of new national cemeteries
21 generally takes five to seven years, and

22 WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of
23 Veterans' Affairs, in 2000 there were more than 325,000
24 veterans from Florida and Georgia living within 75 miles of
25 Duval County, and

26 WHEREAS, the Jacksonville City Council recently adopted
27 a resolution in support of building a new national cemetery in
28 Duval County and urging federal legislation to accomplish this
29 goal, NOW, THEREFORE,

30

31 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

1 That the President and Congress of the United States
2 are urged to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to
3 establish a national cemetery in Duval County, Florida, to
4 serve the needs of veterans and their families in northeast
5 Florida and southeast Georgia.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution
7 be transmitted to the President of the United States, the
8 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
9 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
10 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31