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Issue

To Repatriate Unclaimed Veterans' Cremated Remains

Background

Currently, many funeral homes across the country are holding the cremated remains of veterans that have been unclaimed by family members or relatives. NFDA strongly believes that these remains should be properly identified and given the proper burial or interment along with the appropriate military honors.

Problem

The issue here is how best to identify these remains and see that they receive a proper burial or interment in a recognized Veterans Cemetery with appropriate military honors. In that regard, legislation has been introduced to repatriate unclaimed cremated remains of veterans held by funeral directors.

The bill, H.R. 2051, would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to work with veteran service organizations and other groups in assisting funeral homes, in possession of unidentified or abandoned remains, in determining if the remains are that of a veteran eligible for burial at a National Cemetery. If remains are determined to be that of an eligible veteran, there is no next of kin, and there are no available resources to cover burial and funeral expenses, then the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall cover the cost of burial. In addition, the bill would call on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a public database of the veterans identified in this project.

Congressional Solution

Pass H.R. 2051 and send it to the President for his signature.