

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This expansion of eligibility would be contingent upon Congressional authorization, since current federal law restricts burial in state veterans cemeteries developed with federal funding to Veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents.

Current federal and Minnesota law restrict eligibility for burial in State Veterans Cemeteries to service members who die on active duty, eligible veterans, and their spouses and dependent children, as defined in federal law.

Background: The Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery at Little Falls was developed using a reimbursement grant of \$3.9 million from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA), and commenced operations in 1993. Burials currently total over 4,200.

Ongoing operations are funded by the Minnesota Legislature, supplemented by a federal burial allowance of \$300 per veteran burial (or \$700 per veteran burial beginning in FY12). There were 274 veteran burials at the cemetery in FY11.

The Minnesota Legislature has authorized development of three more Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries, one each in Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, and Southeastern Minnesota-Fillmore County. All three possibilities rate high in the USVA development funding plans, with the Fillmore County option now moving ahead into the initial planning stages.