

A Bill for an Act Relating to Veterans Cemeteries.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to establish the veterans cemeteries board, composed of representatives from federal, state, and county departments and agencies, to provide veterans cemeteries in the State with guidance, education, technical assistance, and other support to ensure compliance with standards set by the National Cemetery Administration of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

SECTION 2. Chapter 363, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§363- Veterans cemeteries board. (a) There shall be established the veterans cemeteries board within the office in the department of defense for administrative purposes only. The veterans cemeteries board shall:

- (1) Identify compliance issues faced by veterans cemeteries in the State, the resources needed, and the challenges encountered by departments or agencies that manage veterans cemeteries, and work collaboratively to resolve any issues;
- (2) Devise solutions to address the issues identified in paragraph (1) and implement the solutions collaboratively with the state and county departments and agencies represented on the board;
- (3) Seek resources, including funding, legislative initiatives, and inter-governmental program support; and
- (4) Interact with and invite interested community agencies, organizations, stakeholders, and veterans and citizens to participate in discussions and board meetings.

(b) The veterans cemeteries board shall consist of the following members:

- (1) The director, or the director’s designee, who shall serve as the chairperson of the board;
- (2) A representative of the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, by invitation of the director;
- (3) The director of the department within the county of Hawaii that is responsible for operating and maintaining the county’s veterans cemeteries, or the director’s designee;
- (4) The director of the department within the county of Kauai that is responsible for operating and maintaining the county’s veterans cemeteries, or the director’s designee;
- (5) The director of the department within the county of Maui that is responsible for operating and maintaining the county’s veterans cemeteries, or the director’s designee; and
- (6) The cemetery operations manager of the Hawaii state veterans cemetery, or the manager’s designee.

The members of the veterans cemeteries board shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in the performance of their duties. A majority of the members of the veterans cemeteries board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of the business of the board. A majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is established shall be necessary to validate any action of the veterans cemeteries board.

(c) The veterans cemeteries board shall develop strategies and make recommendations to meet compliance standards set by the National Cemetery Administration of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. In developing the recommendations, the veterans cemeteries board shall create, develop, and adopt a statewide framework, which shall include:

- (1) A clear understanding of the compliance standards for cemetery grounds and maintenance set by the National Cemetery Administration;
 - (2) Strategies and recommendations for grounds and maintenance best practices to address the various challenges and conditions of each cemetery location; and
 - (3) A standardized system of data collection and information sharing to support the intergovernmental efforts of the board.
- (d) The office shall provide necessary staff and other support required by the veterans cemeteries board for the performance of its duties.
- (e) The veterans cemeteries board shall submit a report of the board's findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved May 29, 2025.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.