

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2848

To provide for certain requirements of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to funeral and memorial services for deceased veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

Mr. POE of Texas introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To provide for certain requirements of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to funeral and memorial services for deceased veterans, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Religious
5 Freedom Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. REQUIREMENT OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-**
2 **FAIRS RELATING TO FUNERAL AND MEMO-**
3 **RIAL SERVICES FOR DECEASED VETERANS.**

4 (a) **PROVISION OF OPTIONS TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF**
5 **DECEASED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall en-
6 sure that the family members of each veteran who is bur-
7 ied in a national cemetery or eligible for burial benefits
8 under chapter 23 of title 38, United States Code, are in-
9 formed of all options available for the funeral or memorial
10 service for the veteran.

11 (b) **CEMETERY DIRECTOR REQUIREMENT.**—

12 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided by para-
13 graph (2), by not later than 90 days after the date
14 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
15 erans Affairs shall ensure that the director of each
16 national cemetery is a qualified veteran.

17 (2) **EXCEPTION.**—If the Secretary determines
18 that the Secretary is unable to hire a qualified vet-
19 eran to be the director of a national cemetery, the
20 Secretary shall—

21 (A) notify the Committees on Veterans' Af-
22 fairs of the Senate and House of Representa-
23 tives of such determination; and

24 (B) after making such notification, hire a
25 qualified non-veteran individual to act as in-
26 terim director of the national cemetery until the

1 date on which the Secretary is able to hire a
2 qualified veteran for such position.

3 (c) RELIGIOUS SPEECH AT VETERAN FUNERALS.—

4 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not—

5 (1) prescribe regulations to censor or otherwise
6 limit the type of religious speech that may be per-
7 formed by a member of a veterans service organiza-
8 tion at the funeral or memorial service of a veteran;
9 or

10 (2) censor or otherwise limit the type of reli-
11 gious speech of private speakers who have been in-
12 vited to speak on property of the Department of
13 Veterans Affairs.

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