

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 1533

By: Stanley

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to veteran burial; amending 72 O.S. 2021, Sections 34 and 1, Chapter 90, O.S.L. 2022 (72 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 36), which relate to internment or cremation assistance for indigent veterans and the Dignity in Burial Act; requiring certain veteran to have been a resident of this state; updating statutory language; updating statutory references; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 72 O.S. 2021, Section 34, is amended to read as follows:

Section 34. A. The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish a program to provide assistance for the proper interment or cremation of honorably discharged indigent veterans of the United States Armed Forces. The program shall aid in obtaining any available burial benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or through private organizations. The program shall provide for a burial grant for any indigent veteran or any person who qualifies for reimbursement as determined by the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, for unpaid expenses directly

1 resulting from interment or cremation. Maximum reimbursement shall
2 not exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per indigent veteran
3 application.

4 B. Eligibility requirements for the program shall be as
5 follows:

6 1. The deceased shall be a veteran as defined by Section 2 of
7 this title;

8 2. No one shall have claimed the remains of the deceased
9 ~~Veteran~~ veteran;

10 3. The veteran shall have ~~died in Oklahoma~~ been a resident of
11 this state;

12 4. The veteran shall not have been in the custody of the
13 Department of Corrections at the time of death;

14 5. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing the
15 burial location of the deceased veteran's remains in a cemetery or
16 the location where the deceased veteran's cremains have been
17 permanently placed; and

18 6. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing that
19 the deceased veteran received a proper memorial headstone or marker
20 at the place of his or her interment as provided for in 38 U.S.C,
21 Section 2306 ~~of Title 38 of the United States Code~~ or that a
22 memorial headstone or marker meeting the same physical standards for
23 size, material, composition, placement, and informational content
24 was provided in the event the deceased veteran did not qualify under

1 the provisions of 38 U.S.C., Section 2306 ~~of Title 38 of the United~~
2 ~~States Code.~~

3 C. The Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of
4 Veterans Affairs or his or her designee shall make final approval of
5 ~~Indigent Veteran Burial Applications~~ indigent veteran burial
6 applications, shall determine whether the deceased meets eligibility
7 criteria, and may approve funds to reimburse the costs of interment
8 or cremation.

9 D. Reimbursement shall be paid from the Indigent Veteran Burial
10 Revolving Fund. If there are insufficient resources in the Indigent
11 Veteran Burial Revolving Fund, payment shall be made from the
12 Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs Revolving Fund.

13 Once funds are available in the Indigent Veteran Burial
14 Revolving Fund, the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs may be
15 reimbursed for payments made from the Oklahoma Department of
16 Veterans Affairs Revolving Fund.

17 E. Application processes for the implementation of this program
18 shall be developed by the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs.

19 F. Rules for the implementation of this program shall be
20 promulgated by the Oklahoma Veterans Commission.

21 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY Section 1, Chapter 90, O.S.L. 2022
22 (72 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 36), is amended to read as follows:

23 Section 36. A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
24 "Dignity in Burial Act".

1 B. The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish
2 a program to ensure a dignified burial for honorably discharged
3 veterans of the United States Armed Forces who, prior to death,
4 lacked the financial capacity to prepare for or to provide for an
5 interment or cremation befitting a veteran of the United States
6 Armed Forces. The program shall aid in obtaining any available
7 burial benefits from the United States Department of Veterans
8 Affairs or through private organizations. The program shall provide
9 a burial grant for any veteran or any person who qualifies for
10 reimbursement, as determined by the Oklahoma Department of Veterans
11 Affairs, for unpaid expenses directly resulting from interment or
12 cremation. The maximum amount of reimbursement, not including
13 private funds, shall not exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per
14 application.

15 C. Eligibility requirements for the program shall be as
16 follows:

17 1. The deceased shall be a veteran as defined in Section 2 of
18 ~~Title 72 of the Oklahoma Statutes~~ this title;

19 2. The veteran shall have ~~died in Oklahoma~~ been a resident of
20 this state;

21 3. The veteran shall not have been in the custody of the
22 Department of Corrections at the time of death;

23 4. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing the
24 burial location of the deceased veteran's remains in a cemetery or
25

1 the location where the deceased veteran's cremains have been
2 permanently placed;

3 5. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing that
4 the deceased veteran was provided an appropriate casket if the
5 deceased veteran was interred; and

6 6. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing that
7 the deceased veteran received a proper memorial headstone or marker
8 at the place of his or her interment as provided in 38 U.S.C.,
9 Section 2306 or that a memorial headstone or marker meeting the same
10 physical standards for size, material, composition, placement, and
11 informational content was provided in the event the deceased veteran
12 did not qualify under the provisions of 38 U.S.C., Section 2306.

13 D. The Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of
14 Veterans Affairs or his or her designee shall make final approval of
15 the Dignity in Burial Act applications, shall determine whether the
16 deceased meets eligibility criteria, and may approve funds to
17 reimburse the costs of interment or cremation.

18 E. Reimbursement shall be paid from the Indigent Veteran Burial
19 Revolving Fund as provided in Section 34 of ~~Title 72 of the Oklahoma~~
20 ~~Statutes~~ this title. If there are insufficient resources in the
21 Indigent Veteran Burial Revolving Fund, payment shall be made from
22 the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs Revolving Fund.

1 F. An application process for the implementation of this
2 program shall be developed by the Oklahoma Department of Veterans
3 Affairs.

4 G. Rules for the implementation of this program shall be
5 promulgated by the Oklahoma Veterans Commission.

6 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2026.
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