



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

December 18, 2001

H.R. 3423

**A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enact into law eligibility
of certain veterans and their dependents for burial in
Arlington National Cemetery**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
on December 13, 2001*

H.R. 3423 would amend the eligibility requirements for burial in Arlington National Cemetery to allow more reservists and their spouses to be buried there. CBO estimates that implementing this bill would cost less than \$500,000 a year, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Because this bill would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

Under current law, only reservists who are eligible for retirement pay and have reached age 60 or who were killed while on active duty may be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This bill would eliminate the requirement that current and retired reservists be at least 60 years old. It also would allow those killed while on active duty for training or inactive-duty training to be eligible for burial in Arlington National Cemetery. Spouses of these reservists would also be eligible.

Based on data from the Department of Defense, CBO estimates that about 800 reservists die each year who would be eligible for burial in Arlington National Cemetery under this bill. Because Arlington is not centrally located in the United States and many families would likely choose to have their loved one buried close to home, CBO assumes that less than 10 percent of those eligible would actually be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This percentage is consistent with a recent survey conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs which found that about 12 percent of veterans are buried in a state or national veterans cemetery. Of those surveyed who expressed no desire to be buried in a veterans cemetery, almost half cited distance or an existing family plot as the reason. With burial costs of about \$1,000 per grave, CBO estimates that this bill would increase spending by less than \$500,000 a year, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

This bill would also give the Secretary of the Army the authority to build a memorial to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in Arlington National Cemetery after consulting with the victims' families. Assuming that a memorial would be built in this location, CBO cannot estimate the eventual cost since the design and scope of the memorial are unknown at this time. A smaller monument, such as the one in Arlington National Cemetery memorializing the astronauts of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, could cost about \$15,000 to design and build. A larger monument, such as the obelisk commemorating the Third Infantry Division on Memorial Drive in the cemetery, could cost about \$125,000. In recent years, monuments to other victims of terrorism and disaster have been largely funded by private groups.

H.R. 3423 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact is Michelle S. Patterson. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.