

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program for the construction and renovation of committal shelters at State-owned veterans' cemeteries, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. MANCHIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program for the construction and renovation of committal shelters at State-owned veterans' cemeteries, 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 “Hershel ‘Woody’ Wil-

5       liams State Committal Shelter Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMMITTAL STRUCTURES AT STATE-OWNED VET-**  
2 **ERANS' CEMETERIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of ap-  
4 propriations, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry  
5 out a program for the construction or renovation of com-  
6 mital shelters at State-owned veterans' cemeteries to en-  
7 sure attendees of burial services at such cemeteries are  
8 protected from inclement weather (in this section referred  
9 to as the “program”).

10 (b) SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS.—Not later  
11 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
12 the Secretary shall solicit applications from States for par-  
13 ticipation in the program.

14 (c) SELECTION OF CEMETERIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year  
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
17 retary shall select, on a competitive basis, three  
18 State-owned veterans' cemeteries for participation in  
19 the program.

20 (2) CRITERIA.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each cemetery selected  
22 by the Secretary for participation in the pro-  
23 gram shall be located in an area with drastic  
24 variation in annual temperature and weather  
25 patterns.

1           (B) APPALACHIA.—One cemetery selected  
2           by the Secretary for participation in the pro-  
3           gram shall be located in a State in which each  
4           county of that State is served by the Appa-  
5           lachian Regional Commission.

6           (3) PRIORITY.—

7           (A) IN GENERAL.—In selecting cemeteries  
8           for participation in the program, the Secretary  
9           shall prioritize cemeteries based on relative  
10          demonstrated need, as determined by the Sec-  
11          retary.

12          (B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making a de-  
13          termination under subparagraph (A), the Sec-  
14          retary may consider—

15                  (i) the number of veterans' families  
16                  served by a cemetery; and

17                  (ii) the relative severity of weather at  
18                  a cemetery.

19          (d) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary  
20          shall carry out the program by entering into a cooperative  
21          agreement (as described in section 6305 of title 31, United  
22          States Code) with each cemetery selected for participation  
23          in the program.

24          (e) COMMITMENTAL SHELTERS.—At each cemetery se-  
25          lected for participation in the program, the Secretary shall

1 construct one or more new committal shelters, or renovate  
2 one or more existing committal shelters, so that each such  
3 shelter—

4 (1) is fully enclosed; and

5 (2) has heating, ventilation, air conditioning,  
6 and restroom services necessary for hosting not  
7 more than 50 individuals.

8 (f) COST SHARE REQUIREMENT.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The share of the cost of the  
10 construction or renovation of a committal shelter  
11 under the program shall be as follows:

12 (A) 50 percent Federal funds, subject to  
13 paragraph (2).

14 (B) 50 percent funds provided by State or  
15 local governments, nonprofit organizations, or  
16 private entities.

17 (2) FEDERAL MAXIMUM.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each cemetery partici-  
19 pating in the program shall receive not more  
20 than \$2,000,000 in Federal funds through the  
21 program.

22 (B) TOTAL FEDERAL MAXIMUM.—The  
23 total Federal share of the cost of construction  
24 and renovation of all committal shelters under  
25 the program shall not exceed \$5,000,000.

1           (g) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts obligated and ex-  
2    ended by the Secretary under the program may be used  
3    for any activities that support the construction or renova-  
4    tion of committal shelters at cemeteries participating in  
5    the program, including costs associated with compliance  
6    with laws (including regulations).

7           (h) FUNDING.—

8               (1) DERIVATION OF FUNDS.—Amounts to carry  
9    out the program, as provided in advance in appro-  
10   priations Acts from amounts specifically appro-  
11   priated to carry out the purposes of this Act, may  
12   be derived from amounts appropriated to carry out  
13   section 2408 of title 38, United States Code.

14              (2) MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP.—The Federal  
15   Government shall not be required to provide any  
16   amounts for the maintenance or upkeep of any com-  
17   mittal shelter after the termination of the coopera-  
18   tive agreement concerned.

19           (i) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall revise regu-  
20   lations as necessary to carry out this section.