



HOUSE BILL 703: Memorials in Veterans Cemeteries.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House State and Local Government. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 29, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Shepard, Wheatley, Winslow, Goodwin	Prepared by:	Karyl Smith
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 703 would require State veterans cemeteries to sell monuments and memorials to honor those interred within.*

CURRENT LAW: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's national cemeteries. The program assists states, territories, and tribal governments in providing gravesites for veterans. Cemeteries funded under the grant program must conform to the standards and guidelines pertaining to site selection, planning, and construction prescribed by the VA. The administration, operation, and maintenance of a VA-supported state cemetery is solely the responsibility of the state, territory or tribal government.

There are four VA-grant funded veterans cemeteries in operation in North Carolina: Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery (Buncombe County), Coastal Carolina State Veterans Cemetery (Onslow County), Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery (Cumberland County), and Eastern Carolina State Veterans Cemetery (Wayne County).

The State Veterans Cemetery Program is established under Article 8A of Chapter 65 of the General Statutes.

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill 703 would do the following:

- Require State veterans cemeteries to make monuments and memorials available for purchase and placement within the cemetery to honor those interred within.
- Clarify that the term "monuments and memorials" includes, but is not limited to, memorial trees, granite or marble markers, and granite or marble benches. The term does not include headstones.
- Allow State veterans cemeteries to require that the monuments and memorials offered for sale meet all stylistic guidelines or requirements of the cemetery but may not completely or effectively prohibit the sale of monuments and memorials.
- Prohibit State veterans cemeteries from charging more than the market rate for monuments and memorials.
- Require the State veterans cemetery that sells monuments and memorials to retain the proceeds from the sale and use those proceeds solely for the purpose of maintaining, improving, or caring for that cemetery.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would become effective October 1, 2025.

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Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
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