



2025-2026 General Assembly

SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 35.1: Codify North Carolina Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund/Veterans' Cemeteries Upgrade & Maintenance

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 35.1

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Prepared by: Legislative Analysis
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Section 35.1 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) does the following:

- Codifies the establishment of the North Carolina Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund (Fund), a special fund administered by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (Department) that is used to operate and maintain the State's veterans' cemeteries.
- Repeals uncodified provisions related to the Funds' interest earnings and allows the Department to annually use up to \$400,000 of the Funds' interest earnings to create up to 4 full-time equivalent positions to maintain and operate the existing State veterans' cemeteries and up to \$350,000 of the Funds' interest earnings to contract with a vendor to maintain and operate the State veterans' cemeteries.
- Codifies the Department's State veterans' cemeteries reporting requirements. No later than September 15 of each year, the Department must submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government, the House Appropriations Committee on General Government, the Senate Appropriations Committee on General Government and Information Technology, and the Fiscal Research Division on all of the following:
 - The overall condition of each State veterans' cemetery.
 - The total funds spent at each State veterans' cemetery in the prior State fiscal year and the source of the funds.
 - The number of full- and part-time employees assigned to work at each State veterans' cemetery in the prior State fiscal year.
 - The number of veterans, legal spouses, and eligible dependents who were interred at each of the State veterans' cemeteries in the prior State fiscal year and the type of interment they received.
- Requires the Department, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, to use the vendor funds allocated above to contract with a vendor to maintain and operate solely the Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery and submit a report detailing improvements and care to the House Appropriations Committee on General Government and the Senate Appropriations Committee on General Government and Information Technology.
- Requires the Investment Authority to invest excess cash of the Fund.

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- Requires the Department to spend up to \$40,000 of the funds appropriated to it for the 2026-2027 fiscal year for maintenance and improvements to install a plaque in a prominent location on the grounds of each State veterans' cemetery. Each plaque must be inscribed with President Abraham Lincoln's promise to veterans and their families made during his Second Inaugural Address, which is as follows: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." Each plaque must also be of substantially similar size and material to the existing Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery plaque commemorating the Gettysburg Address.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.