

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3135

To direct the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to establish a program to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of American war veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 28 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000

Mr. CLELAND (for himself and Mr. HAGEL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

A BILL

To direct the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to establish a program to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of American war veterans, 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 “Veterans’ Oral History
5 Project Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Military service during a time of war is the
2 highest sacrifice a citizen may make for his or her
3 country.

4 (2) 4,700,000 Americans served in World War
5 I, 16,500,000 Americans served in World War II,
6 6,800,000 Americans served in the Korean Conflict,
7 9,200,000 Americans served in the Vietnam Con-
8 flict, 3,800,000 Americans served in the Persian
9 Gulf War, and countless other Americans served in
10 military engagements overseas throughout the 20th
11 century.

12 (3) The Veterans Administration reports that
13 there are almost 19,000,000 war veterans living in
14 this Nation today.

15 (4) Today there are only approximately 3,400
16 living veterans of World War I, and of the some
17 6,000,000 veterans of World War II alive today, al-
18 most 1,500 die each day.

19 (5) Oral histories are of immeasurable value to
20 historians, researchers, authors, journalists, film
21 makers, scholars, students, and citizens of all walks
22 of life.

23 (6) War veterans possess an invaluable resource
24 in their memories of the conflicts in which they
25 served, and can provide a rich history of our Nation

1 and its people through the retelling of those memo-
2 ries, yet frequently those who served during times of
3 conflict are reticent to family and friends about their
4 experiences.

5 (7) It is in the Nation's best interest to collect
6 and catalog oral histories of American war veterans
7 so that future generations will have original sources
8 of information regarding the lives and times of those
9 who served in war and the conditions under which
10 they endured, so that Americans will always remem-
11 ber those who served in war and may learn first-
12 hand of the heroics, tediousness, horrors, and tri-
13 umphs of war.

14 (8) The Library of Congress, as the Nation's
15 oldest Federal cultural institution and largest and
16 most inclusive library in human history (with nearly
17 119,000,000 items in its multimedia collection) is an
18 appropriate repository to collect, preserve, and make
19 available to the public an archive of these oral his-
20 tories. The Library's American Folklife Center has
21 expertise in the management of documentation
22 projects and experience in the development of cul-
23 tural and educational programs for the public.

24 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to create
25 a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded pro-

1 gram that will coordinate at a national level the collection
2 of video and audio recordings of personal histories and
3 testimonials of American war veterans, and to assist and
4 encourage local efforts to preserve the memories of this
5 Nation's war veterans so that Americans of all current and
6 future generations may hear directly from veterans and
7 better appreciate the realities of war and the sacrifices
8 made by those who served in uniform during wartime.

9 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM AT AMERICAN**
10 **FOLKLIFE CENTER TO COLLECT VIDEO AND**
11 **AUDIO RECORDINGS OF HISTORIES OF VET-**
12 **ERANS.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the American
14 Folklife Center at the Library of Congress shall establish
15 an oral history program—

16 (1) to collect video and audio recordings of per-
17 sonal histories and testimonials of veterans of the
18 armed forces who served during a period of war;

19 (2) to create a collection of the recordings ob-
20 tained (including a catalog and index) which will be
21 available for public use through the National Digital
22 Library of the Library of Congress and such other
23 methods as the Director considers appropriate to the
24 extent feasible subject to available resources; and

1 (3) to solicit, reproduce, and collect written ma-
2 terials (such as letters and diaries) relevant to the
3 personal histories of veterans of the armed forces
4 who served during a period of war and to catalog
5 such materials in a manner the Director considers
6 appropriate, consistent with and complimentary to
7 the efforts described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

8 (b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTI-
9 TIES.—The Director may carry out the activities described
10 in paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (a) through agree-
11 ments and partnerships entered into with other govern-
12 ment and private entities, and may otherwise consult with
13 interested persons (within the limits of available re-
14 sources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrange-
15 ments for soliciting, acquiring, and making available re-
16 cordings under the program under this Act.

17 (c) PRIVATE SUPPORT.—The Librarian of Congress
18 may solicit and accept gifts and in-kind contributions to
19 carry out the activities described in subsection (a).

20 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
22 this Act—

23 (1) \$250,000 for fiscal year 2001; and

- 1 (2) such sums as may be necessary for each
- 2 succeeding fiscal year.

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