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March 27, 2007

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Mr. Scott Gebhardtsbauer
Director, State Cemetery Grants Program
Department Of Veterans' Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420-0001

Dear Scott,

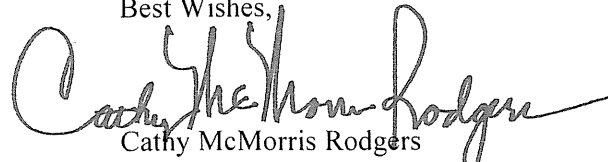
I am writing to express my avid support for a Spokane area cemetery and to encourage the strong consideration of Washington state's application for a grant for federal dollars to design and construct the cemetery. Eastern Washington is home to nearly 140,000 veterans, and the establishment of a cemetery dedicated to them would be a prudent and beneficial use of federal monies. It would also be an appropriate honor and service to many of the over 632,000 veterans in Washington state, and likely from neighboring states such as Idaho.

My office has been working closely with local Veterans' Service Organizations, active veterans, and state and federal officials to bring a veterans' cemetery to Spokane. Dedication of the site, near the town of Medical Lake, is planned for November 2008. Earlier this year the Washington state legislature proposed legislation to establish a veterans' cemetery in Eastern Washington through the VA State Cemetery Grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. They are expected to appropriate \$450,000 of state money for the purchase of the land. The remaining funds, approximately \$7.375 million for design and construction, are expected to come from federal funding through the VA grant.

Currently, the cemeteries closest to Spokane are in Boise, Idaho—over 400 miles away—or in Kent, Washington—nearly 300 miles away. The vibrant veterans' community in Eastern Washington, and the strong support of veterans by the greater community make the region a unique place and one very deserving of a veterans' cemetery. I look forward to the timely construction of the cemetery.

I hope you can keep me informed on the progress of the state's application and appreciate your attention to this request.

Best Wishes,


Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

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