

Washington, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) today cosponsored legislation enforcing new standards to better identify and code remains at Arlington National Cemetery. Wittman got behind the legislation to urge its passage in the House of Representatives before the 111th Congress completes its business for the remaining days of the legislative session.

“One of our country’s most sacred grounds, Arlington is a symbol of American heroism, honor, and sacrifice, and errors and mismanagement simply will not be tolerated,” Wittman said. “After allegations of mismanagement surfaced in June, Army Secretary John McHugh rightly came forward to accept responsibility and immediately make changes to correct the system. I applaud his efforts, but also believe there needs to be larger changes in law to ensure accountability and to avoid these issues in the future. I’m proud to champion this effort to ensure Arlington remains a sacred shrine to sacrifices of this nation’s military servicemembers and honored veterans. Arlington is the last resting place of so many of our nation’s heroes, servicemen and women who were called upon and gave the ultimate sacrifice to this country, a sacrifice which has furthered the cause of American liberty.”

Wittman, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, cosponsored H.R. 6496 today which was introduced last night by Representative Bobby Rush of Illinois. The bill is identical to Senate-passed legislation S.3860 sponsored by Senators Claire McCaskill and Scott Brown, which passed last week on Saturday, December 4.

Specifically, the legislation will:

- Require the Secretary of the Army to report to Congress on the Cemetery's ability to verify the identity, location and burial records for every gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery and the plans to remedy any errors found.

- Require the Secretary of the Army to report to Congress on the progress at Arlington on changing the management and oversight structure at Arlington National Cemetery, including contract management and practices for providing information and outreach to families of individuals buried at Arlington.

-Require the Government Accountability Office to oversee and report to Congress on the management and oversight of contracts at Arlington National Cemetery, including oversight of:

-All contracts for the automation of burial operations

-Cemetery contract management and coordination with Army contracting agencies

-Any corrective action taken to address the Inspector General report's findings

-The Cemetery's compliance with directives from the Secretary of the Army and recommendations from the Army National Cemeteries Advisory Commission

-Cemetery practices for providing information and outreach to families of individuals buried at Arlington

-Feasibility and advisability of transferring the control of Arlington National Cemetery and the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VIDEO: [Wittman questions McHugh in June 2010](#) .

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.