

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3369

AN ACT

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, as the “Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Max Cleland VA Med-
3 ical Center Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Joseph Maxwell Cleland was born August
7 24, 1942, in Atlanta, Georgia, the child of Juanita
8 Kesler Cleland and Joseph Hughie Cleland, a World
9 War II veteran, and grew up in Lithonia, Georgia.

10 (2) Joseph Maxwell Cleland graduated from
11 Stetson University in Florida in 1964, and received
12 his Master’s Degree in history from Emory Univer-
13 sity in Atlanta, Georgia.

14 (3) Following his graduation from Stetson Uni-
15 versity, Joseph Maxwell Cleland received a Second
16 Lieutenant’s Commission in the Army through its
17 Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program.

18 (4) Joseph Maxwell Cleland volunteered for
19 duty in the Vietnam War in 1967, serving with the
20 1st Cavalry Division.

21 (5) On April 8, 1968, during combat at the
22 mountain base at Khe Sanh, Joseph Maxwell
23 Cleland was gravely injured by the blast of a gre-
24 nade, eventually losing both his legs and right arm.

1 (6) Joseph Maxwell Cleland was awarded the
2 Bronze Star for meritorious service and the Silver
3 Star for gallantry in action.

4 (7) In 1970, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was elect-
5 ed to the Georgia Senate as the youngest member
6 and the only Vietnam veteran, where he served until
7 1975.

8 (8) As a Georgia State Senator, Joseph Max-
9 well Cleland authored and advanced legislation to
10 ensure access to public facilities in Georgia for elder-
11 ly and handicapped individuals.

12 (9) In 1976, Joseph Maxwell Cleland began
13 serving as a staffer on the Committee on Veterans'
14 Affairs of the United States Senate.

15 (10) In 1977, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was ap-
16 pointed by President Jimmy Carter to lead the Vet-
17 erans Administration.

18 (11) He was the youngest Administrator of the
19 Veterans Administration ever and the first Vietnam
20 veteran to head the agency.

21 (12) He served as a champion for veterans and
22 led the Veterans Administration to recognize, and
23 begin to treat, post-traumatic stress disorder in vet-
24 erans suffering the invisible wounds of war.

1 (13) Joseph Maxwell Cleland was elected in
2 1982 as Secretary of State of Georgia, the youngest
3 individual to hold the office, and served in that posi-
4 tion for 14 years.

5 (14) In 1996, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was
6 elected to the United States Senate representing
7 Georgia.

8 (15) As a member of the Committee on Armed
9 Services, Joseph Maxwell Cleland advocated for
10 Georgia's military bases, members of the Armed
11 Forces, and veterans, including by championing key
12 personnel issues, playing a critical role in the effort
13 to allow members of the Armed Forces to pass their
14 GI Bill education benefits to their children, and es-
15 tablishing a new veterans cemetery in Canton, Geor-
16 gia.

17 (16) In 2002, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was ap-
18 pointed to the 9/11 Commission.

19 (17) In 2003, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was ap-
20 pointed by President George W. Bush to the Board
21 of Directors for the Export-Import Bank of the
22 United States, where he served until 2007.

23 (18) In 2009, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was ap-
24 pointed by President Barack Obama as Secretary of
25 the American Battle Monuments Commission over-

(20) Joseph Maxwell Cleland authored three books: Strong at the Broken Places, Going for the Max: 12 Principles for Living Life to the Fullest, and Heart of a Patriot.

(22) Joseph Maxwell Cleland was a patriot, veteran, and lifelong civil servant who proudly served Georgia, the United States, and all veterans and members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(23) On November 9, 2021, at the age of 79, Joseph Maxwell Cleland died, leaving behind a legacy of service, sacrifice, and joy.

21 SEC. 3. JOSEPH MAXWELL CLELAND ATLANTA DEPART-
22 MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CEN-
23 TER.

24 (a) DESIGNATION.—The medical center of the De-
25 partment of Veterans Affairs in metropolitan Atlanta,

1 Georgia, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act
2 be known and designated as the “Joseph Maxwell Cleland
3 Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”
4 or the “Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta VA Medical Cen-
5 ter”.

6 (b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in a law, regulation,
7 map, document, paper, or other record of the United
8 States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a)
9 shall be deemed to be a reference to the Joseph Maxwell
10 Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical
11 Center.

Passed the Senate July 28, 2022.

Attest:

Secretary.

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