

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3369

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## 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-

1 seeing United States military cemeteries and monu-  
2 ments overseas, where he served until 2017.

3 (19) In 2010, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was ap-  
4 pointed Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Ar-  
5 lington National Cemetery, where he served until  
6 2017.

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

11 (21) Joseph Maxwell Cleland received numerous  
12 honors and awards over the course of his long and  
13 distinguished career.

14 (22) Joseph Maxwell Cleland was a patriot, vet-  
15 eran, and lifelong civil servant who proudly served  
16 Georgia, the United States, and all veterans and  
17 members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

18 (23) On November 9, 2021, at the age of 79,  
19 Joseph Maxwell Cleland died, leaving behind a leg-  
20 acy 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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