

**Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17)**

*Submitted Testimony for the Record  
The House Committee on Veteran's Affairs  
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs  
Legislative Hearing  
October 20, 2021*

Thank you Chairwoman Luria and thank you also Ranking Member Nehls for bringing the Cadet Nurse Service Recognition Act in front of this committee today.

I would also like to thank the members of this committee who are cosponsoring my bill to include Lois Frankel, Lauren Underwood, Elissa Slotkin and Chairwoman Elaine Luria.

I first introduced this bipartisan, bicameral bill in the 115th Congress, and I am so pleased that your Committee is reviewing it today.

So, what service did Cadet Nurses provide that deserves recognition?

At the height of World War Two, the United States faced a severe shortage of trained nurses, threatening our ability to meet both our military medical needs and needs here at home.

In response, Congress established the Cadet Nurse Corps in 1943 as an integrated, uniformed service of the Public Health Administration.

The Cadet Nurse Corps provided young women with expedited nursing education in exchange for "service in essential nursing for the duration of the war."

In 1944, the Federal Security Agency nationally recognized Cadet Nurses for "rendering a vital war service".

In total, nearly 120,000 women completed the Corps' rigorous training.

Cadet Nurses served in military, VA, private and public hospitals until the program ended in 1948.

However, despite their service during our nation's time of need, they have never been bestowed Veteran status.

My bill will change that.

This legislation will provide an honorary Veteran status to all of World War Two's Cadet Nurses.

And a burial plaque or grave marker honoring their service.

This bill does not provide burial rights at Arlington National Cemetery or additional VA benefits.

It simply, but importantly, pays our nation's respects to the incredible service these women provided nearly 80 years ago.

Sadly, most of the women who served as U.S. Cadet Nurses have passed away.

While an official count of surviving Cadet Nurses does not exist, the number is likely less than 1,000 and most of these women are now in their 90's.

Time is running out for our nation to thank and honor the few surviving Cadet Nurses for their service and sacrifice.

And the United States Cadet Nurse Corps Service Recognition Act is just one way we can express our appreciation for their efforts.

I want to thank the committee members and staff for your time today in considering this priority legislation of mine.

Madam Chair, I yield back.