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LB 227

be sure that the cemeteries would be built and supported with private funds and with federal funds. The plan has been to use the earnings of the veterans' cemetery endowment fund and in-kind contributions of services by city and county entities. This is the plan that makes the most sense for Nebraska and it would not be changed by LB 227. However, if Nebraska is to receive federal funds to build cemeteries, we must amend the statutes to remove the prohibition on General Funds going into the operation fund. The federal program will give states the money to build cemeteries; however, it won't do that if the state is absolutely barred from helping with maintenance. Those of us who want state veterans' cemeteries do not want General Funds for maintenance. I do not intend to come back here and ask for General Funds to maintain the cemeteries, and I do not intend to ask for General Funds for any phase of the construction, operation or maintenance of the cemeteries. What I intend to do is to continue working with private parties to raise the money to apply for federal grant money. The federal policy wasn't in place when Nebraska began working on the state veteran cemetery system. It was adopted by the federal program last spring. And as of last spring, no federal grant funds will be given to the states that cannot provide state funds to maintain a cemetery that was built with federal funds. That is why I introduced LB 227 this year. It is not an appropriations bill, and it will not generate an A bill. The current statute governing the cemetery system prohibits General Funds going to each of the three funds set up to build and maintain the cemeteries: the construction fund, the endowment fund and the operation fund. No General Funds can go into the construction fund and no General Funds can go into the endowment fund, and even no General Funds can go into the operation fund. The change that LB 227 makes is to remove the last of these three prohibitions on General Funds. Under LB 227, there is still a prohibition on General Funds going into the construction fund, and there's still a prohibition on General Funds going into the operation fund. The LB 227 also clarifies how the earnings of the endowment fund are to be used. Under current statutes, the only funds that can go into the operation fund are the earnings of the endowment fund. This means that no private funds can be contributed to the endowment fund. And this is not what I believe was intended when the fund was established in statutes.