

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-6
Title: RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR WHO WERE EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE.
Vote Date: 3/14/2024
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/27/2024
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this resolution is to recognize the roughly two million six hundred thousand United States servicemembers exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War and its damaging effects on the health of those veterans. "Agent Orange" was widely used in Vietnam as part of the United States' herbicidal warfare program "Operation Ranch Hand", from 1961 to 1971. Nearly twenty million gallons of this orange powder were sprayed over the land, destroying vegetation and crops to deprive enemy guerillas of food and cover for their activities. Agent Orange can cause a number of serious illnesses, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, ischemic heart disease, soft tissue sarcoma, amyloidosis, diabetes and cancers of the throat, prostate, lung and colon; Agent Orange also causes genetic damage, and in some cases, the children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange have been born with spina bifida and other health issues.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

No response was provided from the administration or relevant agencies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[ANNE DAUPHINAIS, STATE REPRESENTATIVE FORTY-FOURTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT](#)

Submitted testimony strongly supporting Senate Joint Resolution 6, which aims to recognize and honor veterans of the Vietnam War who were exposed to Agent Orange. The herbicide, used during the war, has led to significant health issues among these veterans. The testimony emphasizes the obligation to acknowledge the sacrifices and hardships endured by

these veterans in protecting the nation's freedoms. Connecticut, home to many affected veterans, is urged to recognize their sacrifices by voting favorably on SJ 6, thus honoring their immeasurable contribution to the nation.

GALE MASTROFRANCESCO, STATE REPRESENTATIVE EIGHTIETH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Submitted testimony in favor of Senate Joint Resolution No. 6: Resolution Recognizing and Honoring Veterans of the Vietnam War who were exposed to Agent Orange. The testimony acknowledges the bravery of veterans who served in the Vietnam War and highlights the detrimental effects of Agent Orange on their health. Rep. Mastrofrancesco emphasizes the importance of supporting and honoring these veterans who continue to suffer from the effects of Agent Orange.

ALLISON WEIR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - CT VETERANS LEGAL CENTER

Provided testimony in support of the recognition of Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange as casualties of the Vietnam War. It highlights that Agent Orange exposure was not confined to Southeast Asia but also occurred in areas within the United States where the herbicide was stored and tested. Recent recognition by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of the expansion of the presumption of service-connected injury due to Agent Orange exposure is noted, including locations in several states, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, New York, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah. The testimony anticipates further expansion of the presumption as more information emerges about the widespread use and lasting effects of Agent Orange. It emphasizes the potency of Agent Orange, noting its residue in airplanes and on soldiers, and recounts a case of a veteran who developed cancers associated with Agent Orange despite not deploying to Vietnam but handling bodies in a stateside morgue. As our knowledge of Agent Orange's effects continues to evolve, it is clear that the full extent of its reach is yet to be determined.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No sources of opposition were provided.

Reported by: Joseph Hamann, Clerk

Date: March 18, 2024