



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

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March 17, 2017

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Valadao
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Gillibrand and Representative Valadao:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, writes to express our thanks for reintroducing S. 422 and H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017.

The bipartisan legislation would clarify presumptions related to the exposure of certain Navy veterans who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam during that conflict and authorize Agent Orange-related benefits. Despite scientific studies confirming their likely onboard exposure to dioxin and other chemicals that make up Agent Orange, these veterans have been denied access to service-related disability and other benefits arising from illnesses presumed caused by the exposure.

TMC has long maintained that these veterans deserve equal treatment with other veterans who set “boots on the ground” during the Vietnam War. That limitation was arbitrary, unfair and not based on science.

TMC strongly supports S. 422 and H.R. 299 and urges the bill’s early passage during this session of Congress.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Army
Association of the United States Navy
Chief Warrant & Warrant Officers Association, USCG
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Officers Association
Service Women's Action Network
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
The Retired Enlisted Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Vietnam Veterans of America

Military Coalition Letter in re: March 17, 2017