

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Thornberry, and Ranking Member Reed:

As you work to finalize a conference agreement on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we urge you to retain the bipartisan Harder/Tester amendment that ensures our Vietnam veterans receive benefits they are owed from their service.

The Harder/Tester amendment included in the Senate NDAA legislation would add three diseases to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) list of illnesses presumed to be linked to Agent Orange. This would provide health care and disability benefits to thousands of veterans who are living with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

Despite the results shown by The National Academy of Medicine (NAM), which has found a link between these three conditions and exposure to Agent Orange, the VA claims there is not sufficient scientific evidence to add them to the list of presumptive conditions. Former VA Secretary David Shulkin attempted to get these conditions added, but he was prevented by the Director of the Office and Management and Budget (OMB) and other Administration officials.

This is a top priority for many of our veterans and their families. Over thirty veterans' advocacy organizations have sent a letter to House and Senate leadership insisting that this amendment be included in the NDAA bill and the Senate amendment passed with overwhelming support on a vote of 94-6.

Our Vietnam veterans should not have to wait any longer for the recognition they deserve and the benefits they are owed. Ensuring this bipartisan and bicameral amendment remains in the final NDAA bill will mean that thousands of veterans will finally get the support they need due to their sacrifice and service.

Sincerely,



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress

/s/
Mark Takano
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

/s/
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

/s/
Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

/s/
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

/s/
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s/

/s/

Richard Neal
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

/s/
Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

/s/
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

/s/
Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress

/s/
Don Young
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter Welch
member of Congress

/s/
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/
André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/
Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

/s/
Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

/s/
Val Demings
Member of Congress

/s/
Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress

/s/
Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

/s/
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/

/s/

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

/s/
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/
Andy Kim
Member of Congress

/s/
Susan Wild
Member of Congress

/s/
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

/s/
Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress

/s/
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter King
Member of Congress

/s/
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/
Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

/s/
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

/s/
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

/s/
Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

/s/
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

/s/
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/

John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress

/s/

Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

/s/

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

/s/

TJ Cox
Member of Congress

/s/

Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

/s/

Kendra S. Horn
Member of Congress

/s/

James R. Baird
Member of Congress

/s/

Max Rose
Member of Congress

/s/

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

/s/

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

/s/

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/s/

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

/s/

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/

Al Lawson
Member of Congress

/s/

/s/

Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress

/s/
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

/s/
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/
Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

/s/
Bill Posey
Member of Congress

/s/
Andy Levin
Member of Congress

/s/
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

/s/
Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

/s/
Ann McLane Kuster

Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress

/s/
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

/s/
Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress

/s/
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/
Tom Reed
Member of Congress

/s/
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

/s/
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

/s/
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

/s/
Lisa Blunt Rochester

Member of Congress

/s/

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

/s/

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

/s/

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

/s/

Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress

/s/

David Trone
Member of Congress

/s/

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

/s/

Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress

/s/

Jennifer Wexton

Member of Congress

/s/

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

/s/

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

/s/

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

/s/

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

/s/

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress

/s/

Sandford D. Bishop Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/

David E. Price
Member of Congress

/s/

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

/s/

Jerry McNerney

Member of Congress

/s/
Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

/s/
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

/s/
Harley Rouda
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

/s/
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Hagedorn
Member of Congress