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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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About the VASVW and the Proposed Agent Orange bills:

The Veterans Association of Sailors of the Vietnam War is a non profit organization committed to the support, comradeship, and advancement of our shipmates who served in the Blue Water Navy during the Vietnam War, and other Veterans who served.

A duty of the VASVW is to supply support to Congress in formulating and passing legislation that will advance the causes of the membership of VASVW. We provide grass roots support and campaigning, proposed legislation, witnesses for hearing testimony, and a common sense approach designed to garner the most benefits for the most people, in the shortest amount of time. We vow to leave no one behind, and to delay no one in the receipt of benefits.

To this end, we are presenting two pieces of proposed legislation. The first, the Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009, will address the restoration of Agent Orange benefits for the Blue Water Navy Veterans of the Vietnam War, their comrades in the Air Force, Coast Guard, Fleet Marine Force, and the Veterans who served in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. These personnel were included, or were intended to be included in the Agent Orange Act of 1991, but the Department of Veterans Affairs denied them benefits, or removed them from eligibility. The second proposed bill, the Agent Orange Supplemental Act of 2009 seeks to provide similar benefits to the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to the Veterans who served in locations outside of the Vietnam Theater of Operations. These Veterans can be identified by matching service records with the dates of herbicide usage confirmed by the Department of Defense. These would include Veterans who served in locations anywhere in the world where herbicide was used, transshipped, or stored.

VASVW believes these two proposed bills address the needs of two disparate groups, that each require separate qualifying criteria, and each being separate bills, would proceed through Congress to passage at very different speeds. While the Equity Act addresses a group of Veterans already known to Congress, and already intended to receive benefits in the original Agent Orange Act of 1991, the second group is new to Congress, was never intended to be a part of the 1991 Act, and will require assistance from the Department of Defense in determining where and when such herbicide exposure could have occurred, thus the supplemental act, with new definitions and a new section in the Veterans Benefits sections of Title 38 United States Code.

Accordingly, VASVW respectfully submits these two proposed bills, with a recommendation that they be introduced at the same time. In that manner, no one will be left behind, and no one's benefits will be unnecessarily delayed.