

Chairman Filner makes AO statement

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) released the following statement in response to H.R. 2254, The Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009, reaching 200+ cosponsors:

More than 200 Members of Congress agree: Agent Orange Veterans Deserve Compensation for Their Sacrifice!

"Republicans and Democrats alike have joined together to stand up for Agent Orange veterans. More than 200 Members of the House of Representatives have added their support for H.R. 2254, a bill to expand the eligibility for presumptive conditions to all combat veterans of the Vietnam War, regardless of where they served.

Current law requires VA to provide care for service members exposed to

Agent Orange by virtue of their 'boots on the ground,' but ignores veterans that served in the blue waters and the blue skies of Vietnam. H.R. 2254 will provide veterans with benefits based on their exposure to Agent Orange regardless of an arbitrary geographic line or location. These are benefits that they have earned, yet the Department of Veterans' Affairs illogically refuses to acknowledge them.

"Time is running out for these Vietnam veterans. Many are dying from their Agent Orange related diseases, uncompensated for their sacrifice. If, as a result of service, a veteran was exposed to Agent Orange and it has resulted in failing health, this country has a moral obligation to care for each veteran the way we promised we would. And as a

country at war, we must prove that we will be there for all of our veterans, no matter when they serve.

"There is still a chance for America to meet its obligations to these estimated 800,000 noble veterans. The courts have turned their backs on our veterans, but I believe this Congress will not allow veterans to be cheated of their earned benefits. I would like to thank the more than 200 Members of the House who have bravely joined the fight to stand up for the rights of Agent Orange veterans. I also urge Senators to cosponsor S. 1939, Senator Gillibrand's companion legislation."

Together We Served

Marines, Navy, Air Force, Army

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