

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 637

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a task force on Agent Orange exposure.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 17, 2019

Mr. KATKO (for himself, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a task force on Agent Orange exposure.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Lawrence J. Hackett
5 Jr. Vietnam Veterans Agent Orange Fairness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TASK FORCE**
7 **ON AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans
9 Affairs shall establish a task force to assess and make rec-
10 ommendations about the care and compensation that

1 should be provided to veterans who have been exposed to
2 Agent Orange, their spouses, and multiple generations of
3 their offspring.

4 (b) COMPOSITION.—The task force shall be composed
5 of the following:

6 (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

7 (2) The Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 for Benefits.

9 (3) The Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs
10 for Health.

11 (4) At least one representative from the Insti-
12 tute of Medicine.

13 (5) Individuals selected by the Secretary who
14 represent veterans' service organizations recognized
15 by the Secretary for the representation of veterans
16 under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

17 (6) Such other individuals selected by the Sec-
18 retary who represent such other organizations and
19 institutions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

20 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the task force are as fol-
21 lows:

22 (1) To make recommendations to establish a
23 program to be known as the “Agent Orange Illness
24 Compensation Program” to provide an exposed vet-
25 eran, or eligible survivor of that veteran if the vet-

1 eran is deceased, a lump sum payment for the in-
2 jury, illness, or death of that veteran.

3 (2) To make recommendations for the establish-
4 ment of a coordinated, ongoing, national outreach
5 and education campaign using such means as direct
6 mail, on-line media, social media, and traditional
7 media to communicate information about Agent Or-
8 ange exposures and health conditions to veterans
9 who are affected by incidents of toxic exposures and
10 their families.

11 (3) To make recommendations for compensa-
12 tion and health care for individuals with Spina
13 Bifida, birth defects, or other illnesses who are the
14 children or descendants of members of the Armed
15 Forces who served in the Republic of Vietnam or in
16 or near the demilitarization zone in Korea during
17 certain time periods determined by the task force.

18 (4) To make recommendations for the establish-
19 ment of a unified policy to deal with the con-
20 sequences of exposure to hazardous materials in the
21 military.

22 (d) DURATION.—The task force established under
23 subsection (a) shall terminate not later than two years
24 after the date on which the task force is established under
25 such subsection.

1 (e) REPORTS.—

2 (1) SUBMITTAL OF REPORT.—Not later than
3 one year after the date of the establishment of the
4 task force, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
5 submit to Congress a report on the findings of the
6 task force this section.

7 (2) ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION.—Not
8 later than 120 days after the termination of the task
9 force, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-
10 port containing the assessment of the Secretary re-
11 garding the implementation of the findings of the
12 task force.

13 (f) DEFINITION OF AGENT ORANGE.—In this section,
14 the term “Agent Orange” means a chemical in an herbi-
15 cide used in support of the United States and allied mili-
16 tary operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the pe-
17 riod beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May
18 7, 1975.

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