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A Not-For-Profit Veterans Service Organization Chartered by the United States Congress

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Joseph Courtney
U.S. House of Representatives
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Courtney,

On behalf of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and our Agent Orange/Dioxin and Other Toxic Substances Committee, we are writing in support of H.R. 566, the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act of 2019. Your legislation would remove the one-year cutoff for the manifestation of chloracne, acute/subacute peripheral neuropathy, and porphyria cutanea tarda associated with exposure to certain herbicides and required for presumption of service-connection. Also, at our 2019 National Convention the delegates passed Resolution AO-17 supporting this issue.

It is still unclear to us, for instance, just who determined, and why, that peripheral neuropathy has to have manifested within one year after a veteran's return from Vietnam.

Vietnam veterans – and brother and sister veterans who served on bases in Thailand, along the DMZ in Korea, and certain other areas – who are afflicted with health conditions associated with herbicide exposure have endured lengthy, and for the most part unsuccessful, struggles with the Veterans Benefits Administration to prove that these maladies are associated with their time in uniform.

It's long past time to end this injustice. It is our hope that enactment of H.R. 566 will accomplish just that.

Sincerely,

National President/CEO

cc: Rep. Mark Takano, Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Rep. Phil Roe, Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Patricia Dumin, President, VVA Connecticut State Council