

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 21, 2020

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

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

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510


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

We write to express our support for inclusion of Senate Amendment 1972 in the final conference agreement for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA). This critical provision would expand the Department of Veterans Affairs' list of medical conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure to include Bladder Cancer, Hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism. Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans suffer from these three conditions due to their military service, yet these veterans continue to be denied the care and benefits they have earned and desperately need.

This bipartisan amendment – which passed the Senate with 94 votes - provides a presumption of service-connection for Bladder Cancer, Hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism for veterans exposed to certain herbicide agents while serving in Vietnam. The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) reported on the link between these three conditions and exposure to Agent Orange in 2016, and NAM reports continue to be the standard for scientific evidence of association since the Agent Orange Act of 1991. Thirty veterans' advocacy groups and organizations have already sent multiple letters of support to Congressional leadership on behalf of this amendment.


It is time for Congress to acknowledge the overwhelming scientific evidence put forth by veterans, scientists and medical experts, and to end the wait for the more than 34,000 frustrated and desperate veterans living with and dying from these health conditions. Inclusion of this legislation in the conference agreement for the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA would be consistent with science and historic precedent, and is simply the right thing to do for these veterans and their families.

Sincerely,




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Jon Tester  
United States Senator




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Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator




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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator




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Susan Collins  
United States Senator



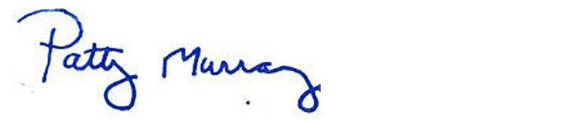
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Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



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M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Todd Young  
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Bob Menendez  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



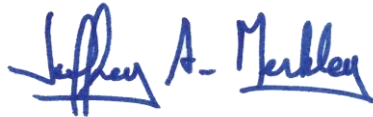
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Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator



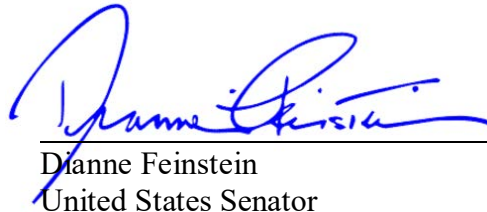
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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



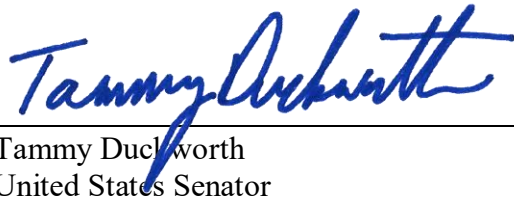
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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



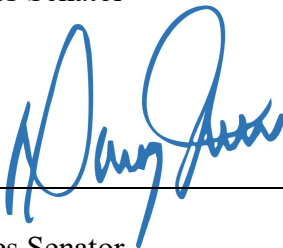
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



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Doug Jones  
United States Senator



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich

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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper

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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator