

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 84 URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO RESTORE THE PRESUMPTION OF A SERVICE CONNECTION FOR AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE TO UNITED STATES VETERANS WHO SERVED IN THE WATERS DEFINED BY THE COMBAT ZONE IN VIETNAM.

PRESENTATION TO THE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MILITARY AFFIARS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

April 16, 2014

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts in Senate Concurrent Resolution 84.

This measure requests for the U.S. Congress to restore the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange exposure to U.S. Veterans who served in the waters defined by the combat zone in Vietnam.

Our men and women who served in the Armed Forces while in combat in Vietnam, whether they were on ships off shore or in aircraft overhead in the area of battle, should be covered by this measure. Agent Orange was a powerful weapon that not only affected and caused disruption for the enemy, but also for friendly forces who were in the combat region and also exposed to its known ailments and diseases.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families in support of SCR 84.

Date: April 14, 2014

To: The Honorable K. Mark Takai, Chair
The Honorable Ken Ito, Vice Chair
Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs, and Culture and the Arts

From: Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Chair, Advisory Board to Office of Veterans' Services

Subject: Support for SCR84 – URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO RESTORE THE PRESUMPTION OF A SERVICE CONNECTION FOR AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE TO UNITED STATES VETERANS WHO SERVED IN THE WATERS DEFINED BY THE COMBAT ZONE AND IN THE AIRSPACE OVER THE COMBAT ZONE IN VIETNAM

As the Chair, Advisory Board to the Office of Veterans' Services, which represents over 170,000 Hawaii veterans, we fully support Senate Concurrent Resolution 84.

It is important to urge Congress to restore service for Agent Orange exposure to U.S. veterans who served in the Vietnam combat zone between 1962 and 1971. I know of Navy, Army, and Air Force veterans who have suffered the consequences of being exposed to Agent Orange. They all deserve to receive the necessary veteran benefits for their exposure to this toxic agent.

Please pass the resolution for the respect of all service members who honorably serviced their country.

Thank you for letting me express the Board's view on this resolution.



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Headquarters: Department of State of Hawaii

438 Hobron Lane, Suite 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

April 14, 2014

**Testimony in Support of SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 84
Urging the United States Congress to Restore the Presumption of a Service Connection for Agent
Orange Exposure to U.S. Veterans Who Served in the Waters Defined by the Combat Zone and in
the Airspace Over the Combat Zone of Vietnam Before the
House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Hearing On Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 9:00 A.M. In Conference Room 312**

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Committee Members,

The Department of Hawaii, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) represents 3,800 members in 20 Posts located throughout the State of Hawaii. VFW is a federally chartered national association of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who have served the United States of America in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters.

In its bi-annual report released December 3, 2013, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), part of the National Institutes of Health, repeats and refers back to the findings of its three previous key reports that indicate:

- The individuals who served offshore Vietnam should not be exempted from receipt of VA benefits for Agent Orange-related disabilities, as there is no medical or scientific evidence to deny those veterans the benefits that other service members from the Vietnam War receive on a regular basis;
- There were several viable pathways for exposure of the crews on the ships of the Seventh Fleet who served offshore Vietnam;
- There is no evidence that Agent Orange/Dioxin did not poison the veterans in question and there is overwhelming evidence indicating a high probability that it did;
- No single group of veterans that served anywhere in Southeast Asia should be removed from the benefits for presumptive exposure to the deadly herbicides used in the broader geographical area throughout the Vietnam War.

In the 113th Congress, 1st Session, Rep. Christopher Gibson [R-NY-19] introduced H.R. 543: Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013 on February 6, 2013. H.R. 543 was referred to the U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. H.R. 543 has neither passed the U.S. House nor the U.S. Senate since it was introduced. Passing S.C.R. 84 will demonstrate to the U.S. Congress that the people of Hawaii support the "Blue Water Navy" Vietnam veterans whom the Department of Veterans Affairs still excludes from the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange, in clear violation of the "benefit of the doubt" provision under U.S.C. § 5107(b).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.C.R. 84.

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto
VFW Hawaii State Legislative Liaison

Roxanne Kamalu

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2014 9:04 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: dne39@isp.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR84 on Apr 16, 2014 09:00AM

SCR84

Submitted on: 4/14/2014

Testimony for VMI on Apr 16, 2014 09:00AM in Conference Room 423

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dennis Egge	NAUS Hawaii Chapter	Support	Yes

Comments: Now that associated symptoms of disease and illness are beginning to take their toll at an accelerated pace, as we grow older: Those of us blue water sailors and others who served in the Vietnam war zone and were presumed exposed to to this carcinogenic de foliant but did not satisfy the boots on the ground criteria imposed later, are sincerely grateful for your efforts to encourage Congress to reinstate our presumed exposed status. Still serving proudly, Dennis Egge; NAUS Hawaii Chapter President

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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