

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 737

Designating August 10, 2022, as “Toxic Exposure Awareness Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 2, 2022

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. ROUNDS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating August 10, 2022, as “Toxic Exposure Awareness Day”.

Whereas, during the Vietnam War, the United States sprayed between 11,000,000 and 12,000,000 gallons of Agent Orange, potentially exposing millions of members of the Armed Forces stationed in Vietnam and elsewhere to this toxic mixture of herbicides;

Whereas, after the Vietnam War, it took the United States Government years to recognize the link between Agent Orange and the health conditions being experienced by thousands of returning members of the Armed Forces;

Whereas the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–4; 38 U.S.C. 1116 note), provided Vietnam veterans with a

presumption of service connection for diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces have been exposed to toxic substances while serving at home, including at Camp Lejeune, where as many as 1,000,000 members of the Armed Forces, family members, and staff may have been exposed to drinking water containing contaminants that have been linked to adverse health effects;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces have been exposed to toxic radiation while engaged in cleanup operations, including in—

- (1) the Republic of the Marshall Islands;
- (2) Thule, Greenland; and
- (3) Palomares, Spain;

Whereas, from 1985 to 2001, at Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Atsugi, Japan, personnel and family members of members of the Armed Forces, including dependent children, may have been exposed to environmental contaminants from off-base waste incinerators;

Whereas the Armed Forces used burn pits in Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm;

Whereas more than 250 burn pits were used during military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Djibouti after September 11, 2001;

Whereas veterans encountered hazardous exposures while serving at the Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, commonly known as K2, in Uzbekistan from 2001 to 2005;

Whereas there were no regulations restricting what the Armed Forces could burn in burn pits until 2009;

Whereas the open air burn pits used by the Armed Forces in many overseas operations may have exposed members of the Armed Forces to a variety of potentially harmful substances;

Whereas the Department of Defense estimates that approximately 3,500,000 members of the Armed Forces, who served in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations after August 2, 1990, or in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, may have been exposed to airborne hazards;

Whereas an Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America survey found that 86 percent of post-9/11 veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan say they were exposed to burn pits or airborne toxic materials;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of members of the Armed Forces and other personnel who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and certain sea locations have signed up for a burn pit registry created in 2014 by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans to register health problems associated with exposure to burn pits; and

Whereas designating August 10, 2022, as “Toxic Exposure Awareness Day” would be an appropriate way to honor the members of the Armed Forces who were exposed to toxic substances while serving in defense of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates August 10, 2022, as “Toxic Ex-
3 posure Awareness Day”;

1 (2) honors and recognizes the contributions of
2 the members of the Armed Forces and veterans who
3 were exposed to toxic substances;

4 (3) encourages States and local governments to
5 designate August 10, 2022, as “Toxic Exposure
6 Awareness Day”;

7 (4) encourages the Department of Veterans Af-
8 fairs (referred to in this resolution as “VA”) to con-
9 duct additional outreach and promote awareness of
10 the resources that the VA offers for those to exposed
11 to toxic substances, including—

12 (A) offering no-cost health screenings;

13 (B) registering for the VA Airborne Haz-
14 ards and Open Burn Pit Registry;

15 (C) providing information on the Elec-
16 tronic Health Record (commonly known as
17 “EHR”);

18 (D) reviewing the VA insurance and bene-
19 fits, including review of disability claims;

20 (E) connecting with County Veteran Serv-
21 ice Officers; and

22 (F) promoting awareness campaigns;

23 (5) encourages veterans to use the available re-
24 sources at the VA and Veteran Service Organiza-
25 tions (referred to in this resolution as “VSOs”);

1 (6) encourages VSOs to continue outreach ef-
2 forts to connect veterans with available health re-
3 sources, from both VSOs and the United States
4 Government;

5 (7) promotes continued medical research re-
6 garding burn pit exposure risks, whether through
7 the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Ex-
8 cellence or other partnership programming with the
9 VA or the United States Government;

10 (8) encourages the people of the United States
11 to observe Toxic Exposure Awareness Day, whether
12 by familiarizing themselves with resources available
13 to all veterans or thanking members of the Armed
14 Forces for their sacrifice; and

15 (9) demonstrates the resolve that the people of
16 the United States shall never forget the sacrifices
17 and service of the generations of veterans who
18 served in the Armed Forces at home and around the
19 world.

○