

CHAPTER 211

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 5018

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to propose a bill requesting the President of the United States to authorize the striking of a special U.S. Atomic Service Medal to honor Atomic Veterans.

WHEREAS, 235 nuclear atmospheric and underwater tests conducted from July 16, 1945 to 1962 utilized 225,000 American service personnel of every branch of the service. These test site participants were utilized as test subjects in providing the answers for the scientists, researchers and government policy makers on the unknowns and effects of ionizing radiation;

WHEREAS, The technical data and knowledge gathered from this 18 years of nuclear testing provided the military superiority in nuclear weapons deterrents, the most modern and safest nuclear power generating plants, nuclear powered fleet ships and a host of modern technological advances in the field of nuclear medicines of which we all have benefited today;

WHEREAS, Site participants bound to secrecy of any disclosures of test activity, data gathered and duties performed were suppressed under the Atomic Secret Act and subject to 20 years in Leavenworth for any violations of the act. No entries were made in service jackets or medical records;

WHEREAS, These site participants were placed in very hazardous, extremely dangerous areas and constantly exposed to the then unknown factors of Alpha, Beta and Gamma radiation in the performance of their duties. They were assigned to these duties with no formal training, knowledge of the hazards involved and with very little or no safety gear. Their exposure to radiation caused them to be wounded by an enemy that cannot be seen, felt or heard but unlike a battlefield wound that can be healed in time they now were doomed to fight a war with this enemy for a life of agonizing suffering and pain of various forms of cancer, often dying in a short life span or suffering a life not of their choosing;

WHEREAS, It was from 1945 to 1988 before the Federal Government acknowledged the sick and pleading atomic veterans in Senate Committee hearings and began to slowly open up cancer treatment for these veterans. It was not until 1996 when the Secretary of Defense William Perry removed the Secret Act from their burden. By now countless thousands had perished. To the present date there are only 23,000 listed on the VA Ionizing Radiation Register list. It is estimated that 75% have perished out of the original 225,000;

WHEREAS, In 2002 President George W. Bush in a nationwide statement said, the atomic veteran's exposure to nuclear radiation was as grave as any war veteran who was wounded in action, where in both cases the veteran stood in harm's way, did their duty and protected the United States of America;

WHEREAS, Helen Malaskiewicz, senior environmental health coordinator of the Department of Veterans Affairs stated, I regret this group of veterans has been overlooked (hopefully this will be only in the past and not in the future) but we are trying our best to make certain they are remembered for their service. Anthony Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, stated in 2003, you battled an invisible enemy and that enemy can leave physical and emotional scars just as real as the scars borne by veterans wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, or hit by fire during the battle of Pork Chop Hill, or injured during the Battle of the Coral Sea or shot down during the air battles over Vietnam. Their battles were real and so is yours. Their wounds were real and so is the damage inflicted by ionizing radiation;

WHEREAS, The allied countries of Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia were presented a Queen-authorized special medal to honor their Atomic Veterans who served with the United States; and

WHEREAS, These old, sick, aging and forgotten veterans who pose no threat to national security and have led lives from the extremely hazardous and deadly exposure of radiation poisoning of physically debilitating and mentally stressful circumstances wish it to be known that this is a request for recognition only with no medical or monetary claims at-

tached and has no affiliation to any other radiation bills in Congress or supported by any other radiation veterans organization: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas, the Senate concurring therein: That the United States Congress is urged to propose a bill requesting the President of the United States to authorize the striking of a Special U.S. Atomic Service Medal to honor its Atomic Veterans;

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of State is directed to send an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, each member of the Kansas Congressional Delegation, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the Majority Leader of the United States Senate and the United States Department of Defense.

Adopted by the House March 28, 2007.

Adopted by the Senate March 22, 2007.
