

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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JIM KARLESKINT
42ND DISTRICT

Re: Proposed **SB113**

Chair: Senator Sullentrop and members of Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

I am Jim Karleskint, Representative of the 42nd District, Kansas House. I am also a Vietnam Veteran, having received the Bronze Star for service in Vietnam. Currently I am a member of the VFW Post 9271 in Tonganoxie.

I would like to share with you the war continues to affect Veterans of that war.

Two issues I would like to identify are PTSD and illness related to Agent Orange.

Regardless of which war or conflict you look at, high rates of PTSD in Veterans have been found. Throughout history, people have recognized that exposure to combat situations can negatively impact the mental health of those involved in these situations.

There was a study done in 1983 called the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study. The intent was to better understand the psychological effect of being in the Vietnam War. Apparently 30% of men and 27% of women had PTSD at some point in their life following Vietnam.

The rate of PTSD in Vietnam Veterans was much higher than those found among non-veterans and civilians. The rates are alarming since they indicate that at the time of the study, there were about 429,000 cases and one million lifetime PTSD cases as a result of the Vietnam War.

Part of the United States strategy in Vietnam was to conduct a herbicide program to remove foliage providing cover for the enemy. Agent Orange was the most likely used of the herbicide combination sprayed.

More than 19 million gallons of various herbicide combinations were sprayed. Agent Orange was used the most. Agent Orange got its name from the orange stripe on the 55 gallon in

which it was stored. Agent Orange was sprayed in forests/jungles and along known transit routes of the enemy.

C123's were used to spray Agent Orange. I recall being sprayed by Agent Orange. It was like a light mist as C123's flew over.

Agent orange has been linked to over 15 diseases. Some include: leukemia, Diabetes, Hodgkin's Disease, Heart disease, Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and Parkinson Disease.

Those suffering from these diseases have been shown to benefit from the use of medical cannabis.

I am one of the lucky veterans. Thus far I have been fortunate to avoid many of the conditions described. However, many of my friends and fellow VFW members are not so fortunate. I am personally committed to helping Veterans and others that can benefit from medical cannabis.

SB113 would allow for Veterans to receive the benefits of medical cannabis in the first 60 days following enactment of the legislation. After the period the potential benefits of this

legislation would be available to the remainder of the residents of Kansas.

Representative Jim Karleskint