



For Immediate Release:  
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## **SENATOR BOOZMAN INTRODUCES KEY HERBICIDE RELIEF BILL**

Military-Veterans Advocacy, (MVA) a Louisiana based non-profit corporation based in Slidell, Louisiana, praised Sen. John Boozman of Arkansas for the introduction of a bill to cover those exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides at Royal Thai bases during and immediately after the Vietnam War.

The bill will create a presumption of service connection between the occurrence of a covered disease and exposure to a herbicide agent while serving in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era at a military base in Thailand without regard to where on the base the veteran was located or what military job specialty the veteran performed.

Sen. Boozman and Cong. Bruce Westerman, also of Arkansas, introduced a similar bill in 2019. Although it received a number of co-sponsors, it was never scheduled for a hearing.

MVA Chairman of the Board and Acting Executive Director Commander John B. Wells, USN (ret.) welcomed the introduction.

“This is critical legislation to cover tens of thousands of sick veterans who were exposed to deadly herbicide while serving in Thailand,” Wells said “I call on Sen. Jon Tester, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, to bring this matter forward for a legislative hearing.”

MVA Director of the Veterans of Southeast Asia Section of Military-Veterans Advocacy Bill Rhodes played a key role in the introduction of the previous bills.

“I worked with Sen. Boozman and Cong. Westerman to introduce legislation to help these veterans and I am so happy that Sen. Boozman is continuing the fight,” said Rhodes, who was exposed to the herbicide while serving with the Marines in Thailand during the war.

Currently, the VA recognizes herbicide exposure for those who served on the base perimeters, Wells explained.

“This position is ludicrous,” Wells said. “They refuse to cover those who worked or slept near the perimeter, despite the fact that the Army Field Manual called for a 500-meter buffer zone to allow for wind drift.”

MVA currently has federal litigation pending to force additional coverage for those who served in Thailand. A decision is expected sometime in 2022.

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