



American Legion Auxiliary

Department of Minnesota
State Veterans Service Building
20 W 12th St. #314 St Paul MN 55155
Telephone 651-224-7634 Fax 651-224-5243
Toll Free 1-888-217-9598
Email – deptoffice@mnala.org
Website - www.mnala.org

LEGISLATION

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The American Legion continues its fight to get the VA to recognize the medical problems (especially heart and lung issues, as well as cancer) in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans exposed to the U.S. military's massive garbage-burning programs in those two countries. Veterans who served there and their families are calling it the "new Agent Orange." Veterans have complained about persistent coughs and horrible air quality when stationed near camps close to these football-size burn pits. The VA has been slow to act until they have scientific evidence to prove the connection between veterans illnesses and their exposure to burn-pit smoke.

I'm happy to report that on March 5, 2019 the **Burn Pit Registry**

Enhancement Act (H. R. 1381) passed the House of Representatives. The legislation was introduced by Ohio Congressman Brad Wenstrup, an Iraq War Veteran, along with California Congressman (and medical doctor) Raul Ruiz. The Burn Pit Registry Enhancement Act would strengthen and enhance the VA's registry of service members and veterans who were exposed to toxic chemical and fumes from open-air burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill now moves on to the U.S. Senate.

Minnesota's Senator Tina Smith, along with N.C. Senator Thom Tillis led the bipartisan reintroduction of a bill on February 26, 2019 to support health care benefits for "**Atomic Veterans**" who were exposed to harmful radiation when they cleaned up nuclear test sites in the late 1970's. The **Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act** would aid veterans who were assigned the cleanup of nuclear debris in the Marshall Islands. The U.S. conducted more than 40 nuclear tests there from 1946 to 1958.

Please let your congressional representatives and senators know that you support both of these bills which aid veterans exposed to burn pit smoke and nuclear debris.

Mary Hendrickson
Department of MN. Legislation Chairman
carmar21@msn.com