



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Republicans | Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 203: The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019

Background:

Agent Orange, a herbicide used during the Vietnam War, has been known to be associated with certain health issues in people who have been exposed to the chemical. According to [The Agent Orange Act of 1991](#), if a veteran served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 and has a disease that has been associated with exposure to Agent Orange, they are automatically presumed to have been exposed to it and therefore qualify for disability compensation.

According to VA's interpretation of this law, only veterans that have set foot on the landmass of Vietnam or who served in Vietnam's inland waterways (also known as "Brown Water" veterans), qualify for the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange. This does not include "Blue Water" veterans, who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 would extend the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to veterans who served in the Blue Water Navy. This piece of legislation mirrors the bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018, which passed the house 382 – 0 during the 115th Congress.

The Message:

- H.R. 203 would extend the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to veterans who served in the Blue Water Navy during the Vietnam War.
- This bill would ensure that all Navy veterans who served in the Vietnam War receive the benefits they have earned
- During the 115th Congress, a similar version of this bill passed the House 382-0.
- The legislation needs to be enacted into law swiftly, as affected Vietnam Veterans have limited time remaining.