

FCoC CALL TO ACTION!

FCoC President Mike Borders is encouraging chapter members to place calls to the congressional leadership on the **Agent Orange Disease Expansion** and to please take all the actions as described in this article.

MOAA's focus on the Conference process continues to be on two other important matters:

- ***Expanding the list of Agent Orange related diseases and***
- **Military Medical Health Systems Reforms**

The House and Senate conferees met for the first time on Wednesday Nov 18 to begin negotiations to reconcile the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among the many issues to be resolved are the differing provisions for retitling of Confederate-named military bases. Under the rules for Congressional Conferences, conferees are required "*to establish a compromise and modify language within the limits of the disagreement.*" The only disagreement between the provisions on the renaming is the time frame for making the changes. The White House has threatened a veto if there is any provision on that matter included in the final NDAA. The political media (the HILL News, Politico and even the Military Times) have focused on this conundrum in their reporting.

Continuing resolutions stall plans to modernize DoD and improve the lives of servicemembers, military families, retirees, and veterans. New programs receive no funds while outdated one's limp forward. Looming shutdowns put some servicemembers' pay at risk. Ask your lawmakers to pass a budget **before** the current continuing resolution expires on Dec. 11, 2020. Contact your elected officials directly by **using this link** [ask them to pass a federal budget](#) because of the potential impact to getting the NDAA signed and an omnibus spending bill passed before the December 11th deadline for the temporary funding of government operations.

Use this link <https://takeaction.moaa.org> to urge your elected officials to support FY21 NDAA legislation that will halt cuts to Military Medical Health Systems Reforms and increase congressional oversight of these efforts.

A recent article from the MOAA newsletter asks for our help in getting three diseases added to the VA's list of presumptives [[MOAA - Over 100 Representatives Call on NDAA](#)] into the final NDAA.

Two actions are requested of MOAA members –

SEND a message to your senators and congressperson and

PLACE CALLS to the congressional leaders ***following the scripts provided***

If you have the time to make some calls, we need help hitting up Congressional leadership. Phone numbers and a call script are below. Negotiations are happening and there is stiff resistance.

House Leadership

Speaker of the House, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.): 202-225-4965

Minority Leader, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.): 202-225-2915

Senate Leadership

Majority Leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.): 202-224-2541

Minority Leader, Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.): 202-224-6542

House Armed Services Committee

Chairman, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.): 202-225-8901

Ranking Member, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas): 202-225-3706

Senate Armed Services Committee

Chairman, Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.): 202-224-4721

Ranking Member, Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.): 202-224-4642

House Veterans Affairs Committee

Chairman, Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.): 202-225-2305

Ranking Member, Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.): 202-225-6356

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

Chairman, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.): 202-224-6521

CALL SCRIPT:

- Point 1: Introduce yourself. If you've been personally impacted by Agent Orange in some way, share some details with the staffer so they can understand why you care about the issue.
- Point 2: Note that the Senate passed a measure overwhelmingly by a vote of 94-6 that would provide VA coverage of three conditions linked to Agent Orange. Tens of thousands of veterans are estimated to be impacted by these "presumptives" -- bladder cancer, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism.
- Point 3: Cite evidence from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) that has repeatedly proven these presumptives are sufficiently connected to Agent Orange and should join the list of conditions already covered by the VA.
- Point 4: Mention this provision is supported by over 30 veterans service organizations and is supported in Congress on a bipartisan basis.

- Point 5: Note your concern that the VA has not listened to the overwhelming scientific evidence provided by the NASEM and seeks to delay with additional studies, which is why we need Congress to act.

- Point 6: “I ask that you support Senate Section 1090B. Please do all that you can to ensure it stays in the final version of the NDAA.”

PLEASE NOTE: The following members of the Florida delegation **have signed on to the letter sent to the conferees**. We should edit the messages sent to these specific representatives to **acknowledge their support**;

Rutherford	D-04	Hastings	D-20
Lawson	D-05	Frankel	D-21
Posey	D-08	Wilson	D-24
Demings	D-10		

As you will see in the attachment **only 7 of our congresspersons** signed on to this letter asking the Chairs and Ranking members of the Armed Forces committees to ensure the Harder/Tester amendment that was included in the Senate NDAA legislation is retained in the conference version of the NDAA.

That amendment would add three diseases to the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) list of illnesses presumed to be linked to Agent Orange, thus providing health care and disability benefits to thousands of veterans who are living with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism.

The message could not be more straight forward.

Our Vietnam veterans should not have to wait any longer for the recognition they deserve and the benefits they are owed. Ensuring this bipartisan and bicameral amendment remains in the final NDAA bill will mean that thousands of veterans will finally get the support they need due to their sacrifice and service.

MOAA has reported that some sources are concerned that this cost will leave lawmakers balking at this provision. **MOAA believes cost should not be a barrier to providing these long-delayed earned benefits to our Vietnam veteran.**

CALL your congressperson to ask WHY they are not behind this

amendment. As of 30 Nov, Congress and Senate are both in session this week. There’s very little time to act! Congress has nine official in-session days and the Senate has 14 days before both chambers break for the New Year. You may also consider calling their district offices with the same message. MOAA voices Matter!