



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Votes to Approve Legislation Allowing Vietnam-Era Veterans to Continue Filing Lawsuits for Agent Orange Injuries

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR July 18, 2012

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

S.6623 Passed Both Houses and Was Just Signed into Law

Queens, New York, July 18, 2012 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens) recently voted to approve important legislation (**S.6623**) to enable Vietnam-era veterans who were harmed by exposure to Agent Orange and other toxic herbicides to continue pursuing legal actions for their injuries through 2014. Having passed overwhelmingly in the Senate with Addabbo's support, the bill then passed in the Assembly and was signed into law on June 29.

“Many servicemen and servicewomen returned home from Vietnam only to find, often many years later, that their contact with Agent Orange and other phenoxy herbicides during their tours of duty had severely compromised their health,” said Addabbo. “Back in the early 1980s, the New York State Legislature took action to enable these veterans and their families to bring lawsuits related to their illnesses, and even deaths, resulting from contact with these wartime chemicals. This legislation allows Vietnam-era veterans to continue to pursue compensation for their injuries.”

Prior to the original law being enacted, servicemen and servicewomen were often barred from bringing legal actions for their injuries because the timeframe for bringing lawsuits began running at the time a veteran was initially exposed to the chemical, rather than from the time the actual injury was discovered. Since cancers, birth defects and other diseases linked to Agent Orange and similar herbicides often don't appear until many years after contact, the statute of limitations for bringing lawsuits had already run out for the veterans in question. Veterans affected by the legislation are those who served in the armed forces in Indochina from 1961 through 1975.

“Allowing Vietnam-era veterans and their families to bring personal injury lawsuits related to Agent Orange exposure was the right thing to do in 1981, and it’s the right thing to do now,” said Addabbo, the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs. “More than 600,000 New York state residents served in Southeast Asia during this conflict, and those who have become ill or who have died as a result of unwitting contact with dangerous chemicals deserve justice. Continuing to allow them and their families their day in court is one way of respecting their valiant service and supporting them at a time of great need.”

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