

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 264

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 1, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblywoman JOANN DOWNEY

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Urges US Congress to create permanent and comprehensive framework for healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to toxins during service.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the United States Congress to
2 create a permanent and comprehensive federal framework of
3 healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances
4 during their military service.
5

6 **WHEREAS**, Members of the United States Armed Forces put their lives
7 in danger in order to protect our freedoms and keep our nation safe;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS**, The United States has a responsibility to provide
10 healthcare and benefits to veterans who have suffered physical and
11 emotional injuries while serving their country, both on and off the
12 battlefield; and

13 **WHEREAS**, There has been a long history of United States service
14 members facing toxic dangers in association with their military
15 service, the ramifications of which may not become visible until
16 years after exposure to these dangerous substances; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Soldiers serving during World War I and II were exposed
18 to Mustard Gas, soldiers serving in Vietnam were exposed to Agent
19 Orange, and soldiers fighting in the Persian Gulf War, as well as
20 those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan after September 11th
21 encountered dangers from burn pits, depleted uranium, sand, dust
22 and other toxins; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Men and woman in the military serving at home in times
24 of peace have also come into contact with unknown toxic dangers
25 during the course of their service, for example contaminated water
26 sources at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas and Camp Lejeune in
27 North Carolina; and

28 **WHEREAS**, Veterans who suffer illnesses associated with exposure to
29 toxic substances are entitled to receive benefits and healthcare,
30 however, because of the nature of these illnesses, as well as the
31 frequent time lapse between exposure and initial symptoms, it is
32 often difficult for veterans who suffer from illnesses associated
33 with toxic exposure to receive benefits; and

34 **WHEREAS**, Exposure to toxins like Mustard Gas, Agent Orange, burn
35 pits, depleted uranium and contaminated water sources can result in
36 symptoms of muscle and joint pain, sleep disorders, neurological
37 problems, gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory illnesses, and
38 several different types of cancers, however, symptoms of these
39 serious illnesses often do not display until many years after a
40 service member's exposure or military service; and

41 **WHEREAS**, Under the system currently in place, a veteran is required
42 to establish a "service connection" for an illness related to a toxic
43 exposure if there is no presumptive connection in existence, but it
44 can often take years to establish this connection or prove causation
45 for a toxic exposure related illness; and

46 **WHEREAS**, Many of the illnesses related to toxic exposures are life
47 threatening in nature, and many veterans who suffer from these
48 illnesses do not have the time or resources available to establish
49 causation or a service related connection, therefore, it can be

