

# Wyoming Senator Stops Blue Water Navy Bill

## VFW national commander says caring for veterans a cost of war

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**WASHINGTON** — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is denouncing Sen. Mike Enzi’s obstruction of H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018. The senator’s reason? We can’t afford to take care of our veterans.

“If we can afford to send veterans to war, it’s unacceptable that we can’t afford to take care of them when they return home wounded, ill or injured,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. “Agent Orange made Vietnam veterans sick, and even the former Institute of Medicine agrees when it concluded that there isn’t any scientific basis to treat Blue Water Navy veterans any different in regards to Agent Orange exposure than their peers who served on the land or inland waters of Vietnam,” he said. “What the senator just did was fail some 90,000 so-called Blue Water Navy veterans — many of whom reside in his state — who had their disability eligibility taken away in 2002 after regulatory changes. His obstruction forsakes our nation’s promise to take care of those who were injured or made ill due to their military service.”

The VFW-supported H.R. 299 would have ended the injustice of denying Vietnam, Korean DMZ and Thailand veterans who suffer from life-threatening health conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange the care and benefits they deserve.

“Senator Enzi’s objection now jeopardizes the chance that H.R. 299 can pass,” said Lawrence. “My disappointment with Senator Enzi’s obstruction is beyond measure, because what he did was fail to take care of forgotten veterans who were exposed to toxic substances, and he failed to take care of their children who sadly inherited a toxic legacy,” he said. “The VFW nor its members will forget this.”

The VFW now calls on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to schedule a vote on this important bill before the Senate concludes the 115th Congress. “Senator Enzi failed

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America’s veterans,” said Lawrence. “The VFW hopes Senate leadership does not do the same.”