

Blue Water Navy Act Now Law!

VFW-championed legislation will benefit tens of thousands of veterans and dependent children

Jun 26, 2019

WASHINGTON – The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is saluting the president for signing the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019* into law last night.

“Tens of thousands of Blue Water Navy veterans of the Vietnam War and dependent children born with spina bifida due to a parent’s toxic exposure will now benefit from this new law,” exclaimed VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence, “and the VFW is proud to have helped lead the charge to return these benefits to these deserving veterans and to expand existing benefits to dependent children. We look forward to the Department of Veterans Affairs publishing implementation guidance on their website very soon.”

The VFW-championed *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*, or H.R. 299, restores VA benefits to thousands of Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans who had their disability eligibility taken away in 2002 after arbitrary regulatory changes. It benefits veterans exposed to Agent Orange while serving along the Korean DMZ with an earlier start date to encompass the timeframe when various defoliants were tested — to Sept. 1, 1967, instead of April 1, 1968 — and expands benefits to children born with spina bifida due to a parent’s exposure in Thailand, coverage that already exists for the children of Vietnam and Korean DMZ veterans. The new law also requires the VA to report on research being conducted on a broad range of conditions possibly related to service in Southwest Asia, which is important for future legislative efforts to create a list of presumptive conditions for veterans seeking VA health care and benefits.

“The VFW is proud of the 116th Congress for ending this benefits inequity, and we salute

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President Trump for quickly signing H.R. 299 into law,” said Lawrence.

Though the following VA webpages have yet to be updated to reflect the new law, veterans and their families can learn more about benefits associated with [Agent Orange exposure here](#), and about [spina bifida birth defects related to exposure here](#). For assistance in filing claims, [find an accredited VFW service officer here](#).