

VFW Supports Burn Pit Legislation

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VFW-supported legislation that could recognize veterans who were exposed to burn pits during the Global War on Terrorism was introduced Nov. 22 to the Senate.

Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.) introduced The Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2019 (S. 2950). If made into law, it would recognize that veterans who served in certain countries in southwest Asia and east Africa were exposed to more than 45 toxins, chemicals and airborne hazards. Those countries include Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

The bill aims to help veterans prove that any disability or illness resulting from exposure to these environmental hazards occurred during military service. However, S. 2950 would not grant presumption of service-connected disability to service men and women harmed by exposure to burn pits.

VFW National Legislative Associate Director Matt Doyle said VFW is urging congress to pass The Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act of 2019.

“It’s a good first step to recognize that veterans who served overseas were exposed to burn pits,” Doyle said. “VFW also is asking Congress to improve how the Defense Department tracks toxic exposures, funds independent research on all environmental hazards in forward-deployed locations and ensures that veterans receive disability benefits and health treatment for illnesses connected to exposure.”

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