

State of Wisconsin



2019 Assembly Joint Resolution 48

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: supporting atomic veterans, their spouses, and dependents in receiving medical care and disability compensation.

Whereas, throughout the nation's history, brave Wisconsin residents have answered the call of duty and service, defending our freedom as members of the United States Armed Forces; and

Whereas, as a result of the Manhattan Project, the United States conducted the Trinity Atomic Test, the first detonation of a nuclear device, in New Mexico on July 16, 1945; and

Whereas, there were over 200,000 American service members, including those from Wisconsin, who participated in aboveground nuclear tests between 1945 and 1962, who participated in the cleanup of the Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands between 1977 and 1980, and who were part of the U.S. military occupation forces in or around Hiroshima and Nagasaki before 1946, and some were held as prisoners of war during this time; and

Whereas, these atomic veterans were exposed to radiation during their military service and, because of that exposure, developed several types of medical conditions that are not currently listed under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA); and

Whereas, many atomic veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or oaths from seeking medical care or disability compensation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation exposure; and

Whereas, in 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act, freeing atomic veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing in order to file for VA benefits; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs may provide assistance to Wisconsin veterans and their dependents in developing and submitting disability compensation claims to the VA and the Department of Justice for death benefits; and

Whereas, atomic veterans will now be eligible for free medical care from the VA and compensation in the form of full service-connected disability allowance, including payments to a surviving spouse or children; and

Whereas, the National Association of Atomic Veterans was formed in 1979 to help atomic veterans obtain medical care and assistance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of this legislative body find it proper and fitting that atomic veterans be recognized for their service and sacrifice for our nation and that they be provided the necessary medical services and compensation for their service; and, be it further

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Wisconsin Legislature that everything possible should be done to support atomic veterans, their spouses, and dependents in receiving medical care and disability compensation; and, be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the National Association of Atomic Veterans; the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs; Disabled American Veterans, Wisconsin; Department of Wisconsin, Veterans of Foreign Wars; American Legion Department of Wisconsin; and Enewetak Atoll Atomic Debris Cleanup Mission Survivors to assist their efforts on behalf of these veterans.

Senator Roger Roth
President of the Senate

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Patrick E. Fuller
Assembly Chief Clerk