

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 108

By Kumar

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize victims of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the United States have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all Americans and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, more than eight million citizens of this country honorably served during the Vietnam War, during which time Agent Orange was widely used in Vietnam by the United States Armed Forces as part of the herbicidal warfare program Operation Ranch Hand from 1961 until 1971; and

WHEREAS, nearly 20 million gallons of the orange powder were sprayed over the land from helicopters or low-flying aircraft, destroying vegetation and crops in order to deprive enemy guerrillas of food and cover for their activities and exposing 2.6 million American soldiers to the herbicide and defoliant chemical; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange is a dioxin and cancer-causing chemical that enters the body through physical contact or ingestion and moves into the human cell nucleus, where it attacks the genes and causes a number of serious illnesses, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, ischemic heart disease, soft tissue sarcoma, amyloidosis, diabetes, and cancers of the throat, prostate, lung, and colon; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange also causes genetic damage, and in some cases, the children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange have been born with spina bifida and other abnormalities; and

WHEREAS, today, only 800,000 Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange are alive, and approximately 300 deaths occur among them every day; and

WHEREAS, while fallen comrades are memorialized on The Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., those veterans who are victims of Agent Orange are not recognized as fatalities of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that we should honor these veterans to the full extent of our ability, as they have made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today and that our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and recognize the victims of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War for their courageous service to our nation as some of America's most heroic citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.