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## U.S. House of Representatives

### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

335 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

July 28, 2009

### **Help Vietnam Veterans Suffering from Parkinson's Disease! Co-Sponsor H.R. 1428**

Dear Colleague:

The Institute of Medicine (IOM), pursuant to the Agent Orange Act of 1991, provides biennial reports on Agent Orange and other herbicides-related health issues affecting our nation's veterans.

Recently, on July 24, 2009 the IOM released its biennial report on the relationship between Agent Orange and other herbicide exposure and Parkinson's disease. This report establishes a "limited or suggestive evidence of an association" between exposure to Agent Orange and Parkinson's disease. The report cited evidence taken from 16 different studies in its conclusion that Parkinson's disease should be promoted from the "inadequate or insufficient evidence" category into the "limited or suggestive evidence" category. This level of association has been sufficient for the VA to warrant presumption of service related disability for other disease areas.

My bill, H.R. 1428, would add a presumption of service-connection for Parkinson's disease for veterans who served in Vietnam, were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides and have a degree of disability of 10 percent or more. Strong evidence has existed for decades to make the association link between exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides and Parkinson's disease. Creating a presumption of service connection will lift the burden from the shoulders of individual veterans, many who have had to become experts in the science regarding Agent Orange exposure in order to try to receive the benefits to which they are entitled. In due course and as I have requested, VA Secretary Shinseki will consider implementing the necessary changes that reflect the IOM's critical findings on PD, but this result is not guaranteed. Nonetheless, Congress should continue its efforts for these noble veterans and their families.

To be added to my bill, H.R. 1428, please call or e-mail Megan Williams at x53608 or at [megan.williams@mail.house.gov](mailto:megan.williams@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



BOB FILNER

Chairman

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

BF/kr