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SEN. AKAKA EXPLAINS (SORT OF) SUBMITTING ANTI-VETERAN LEGISLATION (Blue Water Navy Veterans)

[VA WatchDog dot Org.](#) ^ | 09/13/07 | Larry Scott

Posted on Sunday, September 16, 2007 10:42:19 AM by [Right Winged American](#)

VA NEWS FLASH from *Larry Scott* at [VA Watchdog dot Org](#) -- 09-13-2007 #3

UPDATE: SEN. AKAKA EXPLAINS (SORT OF) SUBMITTING ANTI-VETERAN LEGISLATION --

Akaka offers grade-school civics lesson as excuse for submitting President's bill that would prevent "Blue Water Navy" VA claims.



Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Senate Vets' Chair

On September 6, 2007, Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted "by request" legislation that would prevent "Blue Water Navy" veterans from receiving benefits for Agent Orange exposure. This is an attempt to overturn the *Haas* decision. The bill, S.2026, would also overturn the *Nehmer* decision. (see below for more on these decisions)

"By request" means that Sen. Akaka submitted this cruel, anti-veteran legislation "by request" of President Bush. Senators can do this as a "courtesy" but it's not required.

This was covered in my original postings about S. 2026. (here...

<http://www.vawatchdog.org/07/nf07/nfSEP07/nf091007-1.htm>

and here...

<http://www.vawatchdog.org/07/nf07/nfSEP07/nf090907-7.htm>)

Now, Akaka finds it necessary to explain this all over again by giving us, on the floor of the U.S. Senate, a grade-school civics lesson.

We know it's President Bush's legislation. We know Akaka submitted it as a "courtesy." We know this is a "tradition." But, we also know that the "courtesy" does not have to be extended. This bill could have been passed to a Republican Senator on the Committee so they could do the President's dirty work.

So, we have to ask:

Did Senator Akaka even read S. 2026 and determine how harmful it will be to "Blue Water Navy" veterans?

Did his staff read it?

I think the answer is NO in both cases. For if they had, they would understand that this legislation is a death sentence for thousands of veterans.

The proper thing for Akaka to do would have been to politely decline the "courtesy" of submitting this legislation...then make a strong statement condemning it. He didn't do that.

Akaka says, in the press release below, that he believes in a free exchange of ideas.

Well, here's my free exchange of ideas.

To Senator Daniel Akaka: Sir, you have disgraced yourself by submitting legislation from President Bush that is not only harmful to veterans, but hateful by its very nature. I strongly suggest that you seriously think about the harm this legislation, if passed, would cause thousands of Vietnam veterans who willingly served their country. I also suggest you make a statement strongly condemning this bill. And, I hope that in the future you will extend a "courtesy" to America's veterans by thinking before you extend a "courtesy" to the President that dishonors veterans in such an obvious way.

You can find the Court's ruling on *Haas* here...

http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov/documents/Haas_04-0491.pdf

For a detailed explanation of the *Nehmer* case, go here...

<http://www.nvlsp.org/Information/ArticleLibrary/AgentOrange/AO-retrobenefitrules.htm>

For more on the *Nehmer* decision, use the VA Watchdog search engine...click here...

<http://www.yourvabenefits.org/sessearch.php?q=nehmer&op=and>

For more on the "Blue Water Navy" and the *Haas* decision, use the VA Watchdog search engine...click here...

<http://www.yourvabenefits.org/sessearch.php?q=blue+water&op=ph>

For more on Sen. Daniel Akaka, use the VA Watchdog search engine...click here...

<http://www.yourvabenefits.org/sessearch.php?q=akaka&op=and>

Akaka press release here...

<http://www.vawatchdog.org/07/scva07/scva091107-1.htm>

Press release below:

DEMOCRATIC PRESS RELEASE

September 12, 2007

CHAIRMAN AKAKA'S FLOOR STATEMENT EXPLAINING "BY REQUEST" LEGISLATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the meaning of "By Request" legislation and more specifically about my continuation of a long-standing practice in the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the chairman introducing legislation at the request of the administration.

While I expect that those who deal regularly with the Veterans' Affairs Committee, such as the established Veterans Service Organizations, understand the meaning of a bill introduced "By Request," I have recently become aware that there are some veterans who are unfamiliar with this practice and who, therefore, have misinterpreted my recent introduction of certain "By Request" legislation as support for the passage of the bills into law. This is not the case.

Mr. President, as our colleagues know, periodically the administration sends forward to the Congress legislation for consideration. Those measures that fall within the jurisdiction of the Veterans' Affairs Committee are referred by the parliamentarian to our committee. In a tradition that began in the earliest days of the committee, the chairman, as a courtesy to the administration, introduces such bills on a "By Request" basis. This is a courtesy that has generally been extended to every administration and by every chairman, regardless of the party affiliation of the administration or chairman, and one that I am pleased to continue.

When I introduce legislation "By Request," I am taking no position on the legislation. In fact, I introduce such legislation without including any statement or explanatory materials. I do so for the express purpose of both accommodating the administration and ensuring that others are aware of the proposed legislation so that they might analyze it and, if they wish, comment upon it. As chairman, I am committed to the development of the best possible policy in the area of veterans issues and I firmly believe that this goal is most successfully achieved with the free exchange of ideas, not by stifling different points of view.

During this Congress, in accordance with this practice, I have introduced four "By Request" bills, S. 1757, S. 2025, S. 2026, and S. 2027. It is one of these measures, S. 2026, relating to certain Agent Orange issues, that has generated the most confusion among some veterans. I hope that my explanation of "By Request" legislation helps to clear up these misunderstandings.

Mr. President, I have taken no position on any of these four bills and simply introduced them as a professional courtesy to the administration. Indeed, at this point, I do not know whether these bills will receive consideration by the committee. For those who have views on some or all of these measures, I welcome your input. I ask that in providing your views you recognize that my introduction of "By Request" legislation should not be interpreted as a reflection of my views on the content of any such bill.

Larry Scott --