



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

July 30, 2015

Sent to House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairmen Isakson and Miller and Ranking Members Blumenthal and Brown:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Task Forces on Veterans and Military Families and Health urge your support for S. 901 and H.R. 1769, The Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015. CCD is a coalition of more than 100 national disability rights, advocacy, consumer and provider organizations representing this nation's 57 million Americans with disabilities.

This legislation would create within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service in the Armed Forces. It would also establish an advisory board for the center to determine links between exposure to harmful materials and emergence of debilitating health conditions.

S. 901 and H.R. 1769 are in line with many of the goals of CCD. Our member organizations concern themselves with issues that affect veterans and military family members with disabilities, strive to advance policies that prevent or mitigate impairing conditions among children and adults with disabilities and support efforts to improve the overall health and well being of Americans with disabilities. Through the VA benefits program for children with Spina Bifida, our nation has already acknowledged the extended impact that exposure to Agent Orange has on our Vietnam Veterans. Evidence is now emerging that veterans of the Gulf Wars, Iraq and Afghanistan and their children may be suffering long term health effects from these service members' encounters with toxic chemicals and other substances during their time in the military. We owe these men and women, and their families, definitive answers about the impact of this aspect of their military service on their health and appropriate attention in response to that information.

CCD urges swift passage of this legislation and appreciates all you have done for veterans and military family members with disabilities.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Association on Health and Disability

National Disability Rights Network

Paralyzed Veterans of America

The Arc of the United States

Vets First, A Program of United Spinal Association

Vietnam Veterans of America

Endorsers

Veterans Health Council