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September 19, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Reed and Rogers, and Ranking Members Wicker and Smith,

On behalf of our over 2.2 million members of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) and the National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV), we strongly urge the inclusion and improvement of language contained in the House passed National Defense Authorization Act of 2023 in the final conference report to support our American "Atomic Veterans."

Atomic Veterans are retired and former members of the Armed Services who were exposed to radiation during the years following the end of World War II. Between 1945 and 1962, about 550,000 members of our Armed Forces participated in hundreds of nuclear weapons tests, as well as the cleanup of the radioactive residues and contamination. Moreover, thousands of other GIs were exposed to dangerous radiation levels as a part of the U.S. military occupation forces during World War II in Japan, and those who were held as POWs in and around Hiroshima and Nagasaki before 1946. All were sworn to secrecy, unable to even talk to their doctors about their past radiation exposure. It is vital to note the unique nature of this group of Atomic Veterans and the urgent need to recognize their service.

Tragically, upwards of 80 percent of American Atomic Veterans have already died even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Time is running out for these veterans, and we are very concerned about how many more we will lose because of their age and vulnerability.

We are asking the conference committee to include the following requests in the final legislation:

1. Expand and include Part I (Sec. 1099aa) of Subtitle I of Title X of the House passed H.R. 2670 to include veterans affected by the clean-up at the Enewetak Atoll; Polomares, Spain; and Thule, Greenland.
2. Include Part II of Subtitle I of Title X of the House passed H.R. 2670 to extend and strengthen the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), which provides restitution to people exposed to radiation from U.S. nuclear weapons testing and uranium mining, including the Atomic Veterans who participated in above-ground nuclear tests.

AMAC and the NAAV strongly supports legislation to help our American Atomic Veterans adversely impacted by these service-connected activities. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Carlstrom".

Bob Carlstrom
President
AMAC Action

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Kiefer, TEE".

Keith Kiefer
National Commander
National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.