

Resolution No. 606

EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS AND HEALTH CARE BEYOND 2021 AND TO AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS

WHEREAS, many service members have served and continue to serve in the Afghanistan theater of operations since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, these veterans have served under circumstances similar to those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and the first Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan was not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during Operation Desert Storm and VA did not include Afghanistan in the Southwest Asia theater of operations after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, veterans of Afghanistan are suffering from similar undiagnosed conditions as those who have served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, the authority to extend presumptions to all Southwest Asia theater veterans is set to expire on December 31, 2021; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the VA to support research to verify whether service members who served in Afghanistan are subjected to the same environmental hazards as those who served in Iraq, so that appropriate benefits, including eligibility for compensation based on undiagnosed illnesses, and medical care eligibility, will be provided retroactive to the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that while research is ongoing, allow veterans who served in the Afghanistan theater of operations access to the Gulf War Registry Health Exam; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must permanently extend presumptive disability compensation benefits for Gulf War veterans to ensure all service members who serve in Southwest Asia theater of military operations are afforded this protection.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS