



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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Blue Water Navy Vets Foiled Again House Committee Tables H.R. 299

(Washington, D.C.) – “We, at Vietnam Veterans of America, felt a crushing blow of disappointment when H.R. 299, legislation designed to restore eligibility for VA health care and disability compensation for some 90,000 Blue Water Navy veterans, was put on hold yesterday in the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

“We maintain that the service of sailors and other personnel in Yankee and Dixie Stations should be equated with the service of boots-on-the-ground troops in Vietnam,” said Rowan. “While we appreciate the ‘pay-for’ rules Congress imposed on itself, we have long opposed any effort to take funding from one veterans program to pay for another.”

“While it is the role of the veterans service organizations to make the case for funding programs and initiatives to meet the legitimate needs of veterans, it is up to Congress to figure out how to pay for these efforts. It is an egregious failure of will to, yet again, pass over the demonstrated need of thousands of veterans who are suffering from the same health conditions as their in-country comrades.

“Caring for veterans is part of the continuing cost of the national defense,” Rowan added. “Regrettably, Congress has fallen down on its responsibility to tens of thousands of Navy veterans and their families. Despite this setback, VVA and our fellow VSOs will continue the fight to make the case and work with Congress to find a satisfactory funding mechanism to pay for the anticipated costs of this very necessary legislation.”

