ADDENDUM

HEARING ON PENDING LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS: H.R. 109, 368, 1482, 1483, 1609, 1809, 2155, 2156 AND 2157

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMPENSATION, PENSION, INSURANCE AND
MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 12, 1995

Printed for the use of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Serial No. 104–11

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1996

AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
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Congressman Evans to Veterans of Foreign Wars 148

HEARING QUESTIONS

Imposed by
The Honorable Lane Evans
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Compensation, Pension, Insurance & Memorial Affairs
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

QUESTION #1: In its testimony, PVA suggested establishing an entitlement to nonservice-connected pension benefits for otherwise eligible veterans if they are granted Social Security Supplemental Insurance Benefits.

> Does your organization believe that VA should be directed to use SSA decisions and automatically grant pension benefits, regardless of whether the veteran has actually filed a claim?

RESPONSE TO QUESTION #1: The VFW would have no objection to VA being directed to use the Social Security Administration's decisions and automatically grant pension benefits to a veteran regardless of whether that veteran has actually filed a claim. It should be noted that for many years VA Form 526 was also an automatic Social Security Supplemental Insurance Application. We would caution, however, that we would not want to see a "paper mill" being established. In addition, we view this expansion as facilitating a one-stop service for veterans.

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QUESTION #2: The Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experimentation released its final report last week. It concluded that the list of presumptive conditions for atomic veterans is "incomplete and inadequate". It also noted that the standard of proof for those atomic veterans without a presumptive condition cannot be met, and given the incompleteness of exposure records retained by the government, inappropriate.

> Do you agree with these conclusions?
>
> Would you support expanding the list of presumptive conditions so that atomic veterans receive the same consideration as the Marshal Islanders?

RESPONSE TO QUESTION #2: (a) Yes, the VFW agrees with the conclusions of the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experimentation. (b) Yes. If the expansion of presumptions would be a liberalization, of course, we would support it.

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QUESTION #3: While the bill was not scheduled for consideration today, I am sure that you are aware that Chairman Hyde and Congressman Fawell have introduced legislation to have VA provide compensation for certain children of atomic veterans.

Hearings Questions imposed by The Hon. Lane Evans
Subc. on Compensation, Pension, Insurance & Memorial Affairs

In cases where research indicates that it is more likely than not that a dependent's condition was caused by a veteran's exposure to toxic substances or radiation, would you support the provision of either health care or compensation for these conditions?

RESPONSE TO QUESTION #3: There is currently a precedent for dependent children receiving VA benefits -- that is Dependence and Indemnity Compensation and Education Benefits. We could support providing additional benefits for a veteran's dependent's condition if it is demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that the condition was caused a veteran's exposure to toxic substances or radiation. We would also suggest that the health care may not necessarily be provided in a VA facility but could be provided on a contracting basis. We would also prefer that monetary payments to the dependents are termed something other than "compensation".

Submitted 2/22/96