

On April 16, 2016, Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) made an unannounced visit to the VVA Chapter 317, Kansas City, "Faces of Agent Orange" Town Hall. Below is a transcript of his uplifting address regarding the Toxic Exposure Research Act, S.901.

*I have introduced, with the Democratic Senator from CT, the Toxic Exposure Research Act.*

*It is designed to make certain that veterans have access to their military records from the Department of Defense, from the VA. It is designed to make certain VA establishes Centers for Medical and Historical Research to determine the connection between the contact with those toxic substances and the consequences to future generations, to your children and grandchildren, and then to set the stage for benefits, particularly medical benefits, to help care for those who are affected by the toxic contact that occurred someplace in their family line.*

*And I have no doubt that each of you veterans all knew that they were sacrificing, coming in harm's way, when serving our country, but I can't imagine that a single veteran--any military man or woman--thought they were doing anything when they were serving their country that would have consequences to those that weren't even born yet. We need to make certain that there is the opportunity for those family members to access the care that they are, should be entitled to, as children and grandchildren of those who served our country.*

*Here are the two pieces of good news that fit about what we are talking about today:*

*I am a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee. We have the promise from the Veterans Affairs Committee Chair that our bill on the toxic chemicals will be heard this spring. We now have the Congressional Budget Office scoring, and it's less than what was expected, which makes it easier for us to accomplish getting it passed this year.*

*Many of you, many people with VVA have been asking their Senators, their House Members, to sponsor this legislation, and the support is growing, and I thank you for that.*

*Secondly, on Thursday, two things happened: The appropriations bill for funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs now requires that they contract with the National Academy of Medicine to begin the study of what the studies should look like. While that sounds like it is a long time away, it is the first actual step in which we will have the parameters of what a study should look like. Funded by the American taxpayer and directed by the National Academy of Medicine, using VA dollars. In my view, the VA would never have provided those dollars, but for this now mandate.*

*And secondly, this legislation requires the VA to use the billions of dollars that Congress has appropriated for treatment of Hep C, and not to prioritize or not to cherry pick who is entitled to that care and treatment.*

*So this legislation, this appropriations bill will work its way through the Senate, through the House, be signed by the President--but it's on its way, now, to becoming law, with the direction that we have the study on the toxic substances and their consequences on children and grandchildren, and secondly, the resources that we provided, the billions of dollars to the VA, for Hep C treatment be utilized.*

*Thank you very much for your service.*