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Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Re: House Bill 414

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese, Ranking Member Craig and the members of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 21.

The VA has denied health benefits to cleanup vets much like the vets who performed cleanup operations for Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. I believe that the VA has now recognized those vets for coverage. The question is why are Atomic cleanup vets not provided that same coverage. That is why we are asking the States to urge Congress to enact the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act. This legislation adds to the list of Atomic Veterans included for Title 38 presumed diseases and the 1970's cleanup veterans to officially become Atomic Veterans entitled to the same benefits. Only about 13 diseases have been recognized for radiation-exposed veterans. This list should be expanded and include certain skin cancers and bone diseases. Most film badges were unreliable or defective because of adverse weather conditions.

It is time for Congress and the VA to do the right thing on treatment of the Atomic Veteran and those that did the dirty, harmful cleanups with little or no protection. There are myriad health issues that plague many atomic veterans not only about their health issues but also financial disasters and huge medical bills. It is time for the Atomic Veteran to be recognized and helped by their country as they put their lives on the line for their country. For many it is too late!

I urge you to vote in affirmative for HCR 21.

Thank you.