

# The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE Release  
April 12, 2016

## **REP. CONROY: CONGRESS MUST STAND WITH BLUE WATER VETERANS**

**State Representative Theresa Conroy (D-Seymour, Beacon Falls, Derby)** hailed unanimous House passage of a resolution to restore federal health benefits to a group of Vietnam War veterans.

Sailors who patrolled Vietnamese bays and harbors (blue waters) and were potentially exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War are not classified as Vietnam War veterans by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and do not receive care and benefits for Agent Orange-related illnesses.

“Those in the waterways were potentially exposed due to the spraying that went on in Vietnam,” Rep. Conroy said. “If you didn’t have ‘boots in the ground’ there was still exposure to Agent Orange.”

The Connecticut [Blue Water Navy Resolution](#) calls on the U.S. Congress to stand by the Blue Water veterans and restore their benefits.

“My constituent, Raymond Melnikaitis from Beacon Falls, brought this issue to me and has been a leading advocate in the nation for federal VA recognition to the Blue Water Navy Veterans,” Rep. Conroy said. “Blue Water Navy Veterans continue to fight a battle that should have ended a long time ago.”

The Institute of Medicine reports that Blue Water veterans could have been exposed to Agent Orange by the ships water distillation system or through the air as it was sprayed. Last year, the VA extended benefits to Air Force crews that spread the Agent Orange.

Rep. Conroy worked as a nurse at the West Haven VA Health Center for 28 years.

###