



2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 48

May 24, 2019 - Introduced by Representatives SORTWELL, KURTZ, TUSLER, OHNSTAD, BRANDTJEN, HORLACHER, PLUMER, SKOWRONSKI, VANDERMEER, MURPHY, SINICKI, THIESFELDT, GUNDRUM, EDMING, TITTL, WICHGERS and KULP, cosponsored by Senators JACQUE, CARPENTER, WIRCH and MILLER. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** supporting atomic veterans, their spouses, and dependents in receiving
2 medical care and disability compensation.

3 Whereas, throughout the nation's history, brave Wisconsin residents have
4 answered the call of duty and service, defending our freedom as members of the
5 United States Armed Forces; and

6 Whereas, as a result of the Manhattan Project, the United States conducted the
7 Trinity Atomic Test, the first detonation of a nuclear device, in New Mexico on July
8 16, 1945; and

9 Whereas, there were over 200,000 American service members, including those
10 from Wisconsin, who participated in aboveground nuclear tests between 1945 and
11 1962, who participated in the cleanup of the Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands
12 between 1977 and 1980, and who were part of the U.S. military occupation forces in
13 or around Hiroshima and Nagasaki before 1946, and some were held as prisoners of
14 war during this time; and

1 Whereas, these atomic veterans were exposed to radiation during their military
2 service and, because of that exposure, developed several types of medical conditions
3 that are not currently listed under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
4 (RECA); and

5 Whereas, many atomic veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or oaths from
6 seeking medical care or disability compensation from the U.S. Department of
7 Veterans Affairs for conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation
8 exposure; and

9 Whereas, in 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation
10 and Secrecy Agreements Act, freeing atomic veterans to describe their military
11 involvement in nuclear testing in order to file for VA benefits; and

12 Whereas, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs may provide
13 assistance to Wisconsin veterans and their dependents in developing and submitting
14 disability compensation claims to the VA and the Department of Justice for death
15 benefits; and

16 Whereas, atomic veterans will now be eligible for free medical care from the VA
17 and compensation in the form of full service-connected disability allowance,
18 including payments to a surviving spouse or children; and

19 Whereas, the National Association of Atomic Veterans was formed in 1979 to
20 help atomic veterans obtain medical care and assistance; now, therefore, be it

21 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of this
22 legislative body find it proper and fitting that atomic veterans be recognized for their
23 service and sacrifice for our nation and that they be provided the necessary medical
24 services and compensation for their service; and, be it further

