

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and determines that a large number of Vietnam veterans were exposed to Agent Orange and other possibly debilitating chemical defoliants during their service in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Dioxin, one of the chemicals present in those chemical defoliants, is suspected of being carcinogenic and mutagenic (capable of causing damage to DNA in the cells of animals and humans exposed to it); and

WHEREAS, The long-term consequences of the use of those defoliants may include an increase in the number of disabled veterans in the State and an increase in the number of birth defects in the children of veterans in the State; and

WHEREAS, It is a legitimate concern of this State to provide support, information, and, where necessary, counseling services to these victims; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Governor is urged to establish an Agent Orange Commission to compile studies on the effects of Agent Orange and other defoliants on Vietnam veterans, to serve as a central data bank for the identification of affected persons in Maryland, and to provide a plan for the coordination of legal, medical, administrative, and social assistance to these victims; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Commission should be composed of 7 members to be appointed by the Governor, at least 4 of whom should be Vietnam veterans. The Commission should employ an executive director and support staff as is necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Commission report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 31, 1987; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Reference to the Honorable Harry Hughes, Governor of Maryland, the Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, Speaker of the House of Delegates, and the Honorable Melvin A. Steinberg, President of the Senate of Maryland.

Signed May 13, 1986.

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