

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

CARRIER:

Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: None

Action:

Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: Cheyenne Ross, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 5/2, 5/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Honors United States military servicemembers exposed to unsafe levels of radiation from nuclear weapons testing between 1945 and 1962.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- First-hand accounts of personal experiences of atomic veterans
- Government disregard for safety, deliberate misrepresentations, and threat of treason for disclosure
- Resentment and distrust of government
- Opportunity to speak, heal, and connect with other atomic veterans

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND: Nearly 200,000 members of the United States armed forces were exposed to unsafe levels of radiation during government-sponsored nuclear weapons testing between 1945 and 1962. Many of these veterans were exposed without their knowledge or consent and many have died. They are now known as atomic veterans. More than 20 cancers and diseases are associated with the levels of exposure atomic veterans experienced, and until the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreement was repealed in 1996, atomic veterans were prohibited from discussing their involvement in nuclear testing, which in turn, impaired their ability to seek appropriate treatment. House Concurrent Resolution 23 recognizes the dedication, service, and unique self-sacrifice of atomic veterans.

House committee vote: 7 • 0 • 0

House floor vote: 60 • 0 • 0