

United States House of Representatives



**Subcommittee on National Security,
Emerging Threats and International Relations**

Christopher Shays, Connecticut
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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

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**Rep. Shays to Hold November 15 Hearing
On VA Implementation of Gulf War Veterans Health Law**

(Washington, DC) -- Congressman Christopher Shays (R-CT), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, will convene an oversight hearing to discuss the implementation of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, specifically regarding the extent to which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has met the legal mandate to consider research data from animal studies in making determinations about Gulf War-related illnesses in veterans.

Since the Persian Gulf War ended in 1991, more than 125,000 U.S. veterans have complained of illnesses. Many believe they are suffering chronic disabling conditions as a result of wartime exposures to one or more of 33 toxic agents known to be present in the Gulf War theater of operations. Under the 1998 law, VA is required to assess scientific data to determine which illnesses may be associated with wartime toxic exposures.

“The purpose of the law is to give sick veterans the benefit of the doubt about whether wartime service caused subsequent illnesses,” Shays said. “But in resisting the use of data from animal studies, VA is missing an opportunity to resolve those doubts in favor of sick veterans who can’t wait a decade for epidemiological research to catch up.”

The Tuesday, November 15 hearing will convene at 10:00 am in room 2154 of the Rayburn Building in Washington, D.C.

Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations
“Examining VA Implementation of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998”
(November 15, 2005)

Witness List

PANEL ONE

Mr. Mike Woods
Gulf War Veteran

Mr. Steve Robinson
Executive Director
National Gulf War Resource Center, Inc.

Mr. Jim Binns
Chairman, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses

Dr. Rogene Henderson
Senior Scientist
Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute

Dr. James P. O’Callaghan
Head, Molecular Neurotoxicology Laboratory
And CDC Distinguished Consultant
Toxicology and Molecular Biology Branch
Health Effects Laboratory Division
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-NIOSH

PANEL TWO

Dr. Susan Mather
Chief Officer
Public Health & Environmental Hazards
Veterans Health Administration

Accompanied by:

Dr. Mark Brown
Director of the Environmental Agents Service
Department of Veterans Affairs

Mr. Richard J. Hipolit
Assistant General Counsel

Department of Veterans Affairs

Dr. Lynn Goldman

Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health
Department of Environmental Health Sciences
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Institute of Medicine

Dr. Sam Potolicchio

Professor of Neurology
Department of Neurology
The George Washington University Medical Center
Institute of Medicine

Susanne Stoiber

Executive Director
Institute of Medicine