

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

VIA Email

June 27, 2012

Mr. Willie Clark
VA Western Regional Director
12th floor, North Tower
Oakland Federal Building
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Mr. Douglas Bragg
Director, Oakland VA
12th floor, North Tower
Oakland Federal Building
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Clark and Mr. Bragg:

A large number of claims that we have asked you to review over the past two months have involved Vietnam veterans with cancer or heart conditions. Over the past two week some of these veterans have called to say the VA has acted on their claim—they are very grateful. We thank you for helping provide these veterans the benefits due them.

The estimated 200 cases that our offices have reviewed is a very small sample of the overall backlog at the Oakland VA. You've informed us that Vietnam era veterans comprise 36 percent of the backlog. Are you able, or willing to fast-track cases if the DD214 shows the Vietnam veteran was in-country and the veteran says he has a condition that under law is presumed to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange? Many of these veterans are over the age of 70—they don't have the luxury of waiting for claim decisions indefinitely that will affect them and, in many cases, their spouses. We realize that you need to review documents to verify health conditions—this takes time along with considering the other conditions that may be part of a claim.

We are simply asking if your processing system has the ability to identify and fast-track claims for veterans with service in Vietnam and who have diseases linked to Agent Orange?

Sincerely,


Jackie Speier


Barbara Lee

cc: Justin Brown