HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 5056 FILED ON: 8/15/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 4688

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James K. Hawkins and Kelly W. Pease

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act making August 10th Agent Orange Awareness Day in Massachusetts.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
James K. Hawkins	*2nd Bristol*	*8/15/2025*
Kelly W. Pease	*4th Hampden*	*9/9/2025*
Shirley B. Arriaga	*8th Hampden*	*9/9/2025*
Michelle L. Badger	*1st Plymouth*	*10/12/2025*
Lisa Field	*3rd Bristol*	*9/10/2025*
Brandy Fluker-Reid	*12th Suffolk*	*10/1/2025*
Carmine Lawrence Gentile	*13th Middlesex*	*9/11/2025*
Ryan M. Hamilton	*15th Essex*	*9/11/2025*
Natalie M. Higgins	*4th Worcester*	*9/25/2025*
Patrick Joseph Kearney	*4th Plymouth*	*9/10/2025*
Kathleen R. LaNatra	*12th Plymouth*	*9/9/2025*
John J. Marsi	*6th Worcester*	*9/9/2025*
Brian W. Murray	*10th Worcester*	*9/10/2025*
Tram T. Nguyen	*18th Essex*	*9/9/2025*
Steven J. Ouellette	*8th Bristol*	*9/11/2025*
Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.	*12th Hampden*	*9/10/2025*
Alan Silvia	*7th Bristol*	*9/18/2025*
David T. Vieira	*3rd Barnstable*	*9/24/2025*

Susannah M. Whipps	*2nd Franklin*	*9/9/2025*
Steven George Xiarhos	*5th Barnstable*	*9/9/2025*

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By Representatives Hawkins of Attleboro and Pease of Westfield, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of James K. Hawkins, Kelly W. Pease and others for legislation to designate August 10th as Agent Orange awareness day. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act making August 10th Agent Orange Awareness Day in Massachusetts.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to designate forthwith August 10th Agent Orange Awareness Day, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Part I, Title II, Chapter 6, of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Section 15XXXXX: "The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart August 10th as Agent Orange Awareness Day and recommending that the day be observed in an appropriate manner by the people."

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Commonwealth is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty. The citizens of the United States have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and

leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all Americans and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, more than eight million citizens of this country honorably served during the Vietnam War, during which time Agent Orange was widely used in Vietnam by the United States Armed Forces as part of the herbicidal warfare program Operation Ranch Hand from 1961 until 1971. Nearly 20 million gallons of the orange powder were sprayed over the land from helicopters or low-flying aircraft, destroying vegetation and crops to deprive enemy guerrillas of food and cover for their activities and exposing 2.6 million American soldiers to the herbicide and defoliant chemical; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange is a dioxin and cancer-causing chemical that enters the body through physical contact or ingestion and moves into the human cell nucleus, where it attacks the genes and causes a number of serious illnesses, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, ischemic heart disease, soft tissue sarcoma, amyloidosis, diabetes, and cancers of the throat, prostate, lung, and colon. Agent Orange also causes genetic damage, and in some cases, the children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange have been born with spina bifida and other abnormalities. Today, only 800,000 Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange are alive, and approximately 300 deaths occur among them every day; and

WHEREAS, while fallen comrades are memorialized on The Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., those veterans who are victims of Agent Orange are not recognized as fatalities of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that we should honor these veterans to the full extent of our ability, as they have made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we

enjoy today and that our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; now, therefore,

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts honors and recognizes the victims of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War for their courageous service to our nation as some of America's most heroic citizens.

THEREFORE, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts officially declares August 10th as Agent Orange Awareness Day and recognizes it as such.