

KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

NEW YORK
SENATOR

RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE 478
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205
202-224-4451

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
AGRICULTURE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

July 15, 2019

The Honorable Robert L. Wilkie
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

We write to express opposition to your recent decision to delay benefits by another six months to the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans. This is a disheartening and unnecessary action, and we urge you to reverse the decision and provide benefits to eligible Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans without further delay.

As you know Congress unanimously passed legislation providing benefits consistent with the *Procopio* decision. Many of the 14,500 Blue Water Veteran claims have already been submitted to the VA over the years, and the VA has already identified this population once in order to deny the claims. There is nothing left to do besides processing the claims, and we strongly urge the VA to do so as quickly as possible. Delaying these benefits for another six month without specific and valid cause only adds insult to these veterans, many of whom have been waiting for these benefits for seventeen years.

In short, it is time to provide these veterans, and their families, with the benefits they have been denied for too long. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Steve Daines
United States Senator