ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 264

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 9, 2021

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Resolution No. 264.

The men and women of the United States military put their lives on the line in order to protect our nation and fight for freedom. It goes without saying that we owe these brave men and women a debt of gratitude, and at the very least, the promise that the physical and emotional injuries they may suffer as a result of such service will be provided for by way of a comprehensive healthcare and benefits system.

Exposure to dangerous toxins like Mustard Gas, Agent Orange, depleted uranium sources, and hazards from burn pits have become common place in modern era warfare. Unfortunately, symptoms of illnesses related to exposure to such toxic substances often do not occur right away and it can sometimes be difficult to prove a causal relationship. The current benefit system can be complex and difficult for some veterans to navigate, especially when there is no presumptive causation process in place. As a result, veterans in dire need of benefits and healthcare may have those benefits and healthcare, which are vital to their survival, delayed or denied.

This resolution urges the United States Congress to create a permanent and comprehensive federal framework for veterans exposed to toxic substances during the course of their military service to obtain healthcare and benefits.