

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 19

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH PENNACCHIO

District 26 (Morris and Passaic)

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Designates July 16 of each year as “Atomic Veterans Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee with technical review.



SJR19 PENNACCHIO, CRYAN

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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating July 16 of each year as “Atomic
2 Veterans Day” in New Jersey.

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4 **WHEREAS**, July 16 is the anniversary of “Trinity,” the first detonation
5 of an atomic weapon, which took place at Alamogordo Air Force
6 Base in New Mexico on July 16, 1945; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Atomic Veterans are American military service members
8 who participated in nuclear tests of atomic weapons between 1945
9 and 1962, served with United States military forces in or around
10 Hiroshima and Nagasaki through mid-1946, or were held as
11 prisoners of war in or near Hiroshima or Nagasaki; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Approximately 250,000 veterans of the United States,
13 including residents of New Jersey, witnessed and participated in at
14 least 235 atmospheric nuclear weapons tests; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Many Atomic Veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or
16 oaths from seeking medical care or disability compensation from
17 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for
18 conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation
19 exposure; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The National Association of Atomic Veterans was formed
21 in 1979 to help Atomic Veterans obtain medical care and
22 assistance; and

23 **WHEREAS**, In 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear
24 Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act, freeing Atomic Veterans to
25 describe their military involvement in nuclear testing and to file for
26 VA benefits; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Although Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and
28 Secrecy Agreements Act, thousands of Atomic Veterans had
29 already died, their families never knowing the true extent of their
30 service; and

31 **WHEREAS**, Atomic Veterans patriotically served this country, meeting
32 the needs of national defense during a critical period in history; and

33 **WHEREAS**, This State designates July 16 of each year as Atomic
34 Veterans Day to honor the important role Atomic Veterans played
35 in the defense of our Nation; now, therefore,

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37 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
38 *State of New Jersey:*

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40 1. a. July 16 of each year is designated as “Atomic Veterans
41 Day” in the State of New Jersey to honor the important role Atomic
42 Veterans played in the defense of our Nation.

43 b. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue an annual
44 proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State
45 to observe “Atomic Veterans Day” with appropriate activities and
46 programs.

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48 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This resolution designates July 16 of each year as “Atomic Veterans Day” in New Jersey.

Atomic Veterans are American military service members who participated in nuclear tests of atomic weapons between 1945 and 1962. They served with United States military forces in or around Hiroshima and Nagasaki through mid-1946, or were held as prisoners of war in or near Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Approximately 250,000 veterans of the United States, including residents of New Jersey, witnessed and participated in at least 235 atmospheric nuclear weapons tests.

Many Atomic Veterans were prevented by secrecy laws or oaths from seeking medical care or disability compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for conditions they may have developed as a result of radiation exposure. In 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrety Agreements Act, freeing Atomic Veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing and to file for VA benefits.

Atomic Veterans patriotically served this country, meeting the needs of national defense during a critical period in history. This State designates July 16 of each year as Atomic Veterans Day to honor the important role Atomic Veterans played in the defense of our Nation.