

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION No. 19

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 13, 2024

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Joint Resolution No. 19.

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 In 1996, the United States Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act, freeing Atomic Veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing and to file for VA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.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.