Rep. Israel's efforts have secured more than $4.3 million in overdue benefits for local veterans

Hauppauge, NY— Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) announced a victory for East Northport Vietnam Veteran Kenneth Zegel. Rep. Israel's office was able to expedite Zegel's disability claim for Parkinson's Disease and secured a retroactive award of $ 39,924 and monthly disability payments going forward.

"Kenneth Zegel fought for us in one of the most horrific wars our nation has faced. He shouldn't now have to fight for the benefits he rightfully earned. One of the most important things my office does on a daily basis is assist our local veterans to ensure we are supporting them, just as they supported us. I'm proud to have secured more than $4.3 million in back payments for Long Island veterans and I won't stop there," said Rep. Israel.

Kenneth Zegel served in the U.S. Air Force from December 13, 1965 – May 22, 1969, including a tour in Vietnam. Beginning in 2009, the VA recognized a list of conditions that are now considered presumptive of Agent Orange exposure, including Parkinson's Disease. Following the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki determined the VA should expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam Veterans is presumed.

Rep. Israel's office regularly assists local veterans with claims and other issues with the Veterans Administration. His efforts have secured more than $4.3 million in back payments for Long Island veterans.