

April 14, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the United States Service members and veterans we represent, our Veterans and Military Service Organizations call on the Senate to expeditiously pass the comprehensive *Honoring Our PACT Act* (H.R. 3967), which passed the House on March 3 with a bipartisan vote of 256 - 174.

The bill has the support of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the White House, and the below-listed organizations. We applaud the Senate Majority Leader for promising a floor vote on the bill, and we are calling on all Senators to vote in favor of it.

Throughout our history, and most recently over the course of more than 20 years of war in the post-9/11 era, service members and veterans suffered prolonged exposure to dangerous toxic substances, such as burn pits that destroyed trash, medical and human waste, chemicals, and fuel, in and around the battlefields of Iraq, Afghanistan and other places. Of the hundreds of thousands of our members who have suffered these exposures, many have returned home sick (or would become ill), and many have also died of their toxic injuries.

Collectively, we have spent years educating Congress, national leaders, and the public on the enormous scope of the injuries faced by toxic-exposed veterans and Service members. There have been small-scale measures to boost education, training, research, and outreach to begin to address the problem. Over the last several years, many of our organizations have worked together to assemble the components of comprehensive toxic exposure legislation that provides VA health care, a new process to determine future presumptive conditions, and provide overdue disability benefits to thousands of veterans from all wars and eras suffering from toxic exposures.

There have been several bills introduced that address different aspects of the toxic exposures puzzle; however, the *Honoring Our PACT Act* is the only bill that provides a truly comprehensive solution. Although many of us have supported some of these other burn pits and toxic exposure bills, none of them provides a complete and lasting solution for veterans who are or may become ill because of toxic exposures. Consequently, when the *Honoring Our PACT Act* is brought to the floor for consideration, it must remain comprehensive, to include guaranteeing non-expiring access to VA health care, creating a presumption that certain diseases are related to exposure, conceding that exposure occurred, and establishing a framework to decide new presumptive illnesses going forward.

Our organizations call on the Senate to pass the *Honoring Our PACT Act* without further delay, to finally provide those who have laid their lives on the line for all Americans with the health care and benefits they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Aces and Eights

AFGfree

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)

Army Aviation Association of America

Balanced Veterans Network

Blinded Veterans Association

Burn Pits 360

California Communities Against Toxics

Cease Fire Campaign

Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services

Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)

Environmental Working Group (EWG)

Feel Good Foundation

Flanders Fields

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Gold Star Wives of America

GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer

Green Beret Foundation

Grunt Style

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)

Marine Corps Reserve Association

Military Chaplains Association

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)

Military-Veterans Advocacy

Military Veterans of America

Minority Veterans of America

Modern Military Association of America (MMAA)

National Association of County Veterans Service Officers

National Military Family Association (NMFA)

National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP)

Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)

Operation 620

Operation Freedom Birds
Operation Northstar
Operation Pineapple
Operation Recovery
Operation Sacred Promise
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)
Project 9 Line
Reserve Organization of America (ROA)
Special Operations Association of America
Student Veterans of America (SVA)
Task Force Argo
Task Force Dagger Foundation
Task Force Diablo
TF Hawk
The American Legion
The Enlisted Association (TREA)
The Lifeline Foundation
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
United Soldiers and Sailors of America
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
Veterans Prostate Cancer Awareness
Veteran Warriors
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
We the Veterans Society for American Democracy
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)
YourNexStage (YNS)