June 2, 2022

The Honorable Jon Tester  The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman  Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
United States Senate  United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Moran,

On behalf of the United States Service members, veterans, family members, and survivors we represent, our Veterans and Military Service Organizations are proud to offer our strong support for the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our PACT Act of 2022, as amended. A motion to invoke cloture was filed for this measure on May 26, 2022, and we anticipate that it will be brought to the Senate floor for a vote in the near future.

Throughout our history, Service members have suffered exposures to dangerous toxic substances while performing their duties both in combat and in peacetime. Most recently, a generation of veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and surrounding areas experienced recurring and prolonged exposure to toxic fumes from burn pits and other environmental hazards. As a result, many of them have developed respiratory conditions, cancers, and other serious illnesses, and many have already died. Sadly, far too many continue to struggle to access health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because they cannot prove their toxic injuries are connected to their service.

If enacted, this comprehensive legislation would finally correct this injustice by guaranteeing exposed veterans permanent access to VA care and establish a list of conditions that are presumed to be linked to exposures so that impacted veterans receive their full benefits. Additionally, this bill would provide justice for exposed Camp Lejeune veterans, expand long overdue Agent Orange presumptions, enhance VA research, training, and screening related to toxic exposures, and improve VA claims processing, workforce recruitment and retention, and infrastructure.

We commend you for your steadfast work to reach a bipartisan agreement on certain changes to the text of the bill as passed by the House. We note that these changes will ensure that VA is able to successfully implement all provisions of the bill without disrupting services or significantly impacting backlogs for veterans already in the system. Your bipartisan agreement recognizes that caring for veterans with toxic injuries must be viewed as a cost of war.

Messrs. Chairman and Ranking Member, due to your leadership, commitment, and inclusion of VSO feedback at every step of the process, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our PACT Act of 2022 is the most comprehensive, veteran-supported toxic exposure bill in the history of the U.S. Congress. We look forward to continuing to work with you to secure the passage of this landmark legislation and encourage every Senator to offer their support and vote “yes” to invoke cloture and “yes” on final passage.

Sincerely,
Air Force Sergeants Association
AMVETS
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States
Balanced Veterans Network
Blinded Veterans Association
Blue Star Families
Burn Pits 360
California Communities Against Toxics
Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS
Disabled American Veterans
Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
FealGood Foundation
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
Green Beret Foundation
Grunt Style Foundation
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans
K9s For Warriors
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Chaplains Association
Minority Veterans of America
Military Officers Association of America
Military-Veterans Advocacy
Military Veterans of America
Modern Military Association of America
National Association of County Veterans Service Officers
National Military Family Association
National Veterans Legal Services Program
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of America
ROA
Service Women's Action Network
Special Operations Association of America
Student Veterans of America
Task Force Dagger Special Operations Foundation
The American Legion
The Independence Fund
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
TREA
United Soldiers and Sailors of America
US Army Warrant Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Veterans Prostate Cancer
Veteran Warriors
Vietnam Veterans of America
We the Veterans
Wounded Warrior Project
Your Next Stage