

VA



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VA Secretary Denis McDonough statement on PACT Act

WASHINGTON — President Biden has stated we have a sacred obligation to support Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. As part of his first State of the Union address, he identified supporting Veterans as a key pillar of his [Unity Agenda](#) and an issue that can unite the country. The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act makes good on that promise.

In my [recent press conference](#), I spoke in detail about the Department of Veterans Affairs' strong support of the PACT Act because the bipartisan bill will help us advance one of the department's top priorities: getting more Veterans into VA care. President Biden has also been clear about his commitment to getting more VA health care to veterans impacted by toxic exposures, which is why we need Congress to send the PACT Act to his desk.

Study after study demonstrates Veterans in VA care do better — and this legislation could bring up to 3.5 million more Veterans into our care. The PACT Act would be one of the largest substantive health and benefit expansions in VA's history, comparable in scale and impact to the Agent Orange Act. It would codify many of the ongoing efforts by the department to improve its process for establishment of presumptions of service connection due to toxic exposure, reducing the burden for Veterans and increasing transparency.

We support the expansion of access to VA health care in the PACT Act and will work to ensure that the expansion of eligibility for health care does not result in the delay or disruption of care for those Veterans already receiving health care from VA.

I want to personally thank Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) for beginning to address the operational impact on VA by investing heavily in VA claims processing, VA's workforce and VA health care facilities. These investments and more are necessary for us to deliver the timely, quality services, benefits and care our Veterans deserve.

As always, we encourage Veterans to continue to file their claims for disability compensation and other benefits as we anticipate this legislation so VA can provide the benefits and care they have earned and deserve.

[View the full press conference.](#)

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