



Veterans for Common Sense (VCS)

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VeteransforCommonSense.org

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STATEMENT

July 29, 2022

Veterans for Common Sense today issued the following statement regarding the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics ("Honoring Our PACT")* Act of 2022 to help veterans and their survivors afflicted by toxic wounds resulting from military toxic exposures.

"Once upon a time, national defense issues including veterans' issues were sacred in our national politics. We stand with our fellow Gulf War, post-9/11, Vietnam, and other toxic-wounded veterans in pointedly reminding Congress: national defense including veterans issues should never be subject to partisan politics.

Stop playing politics with veterans. Pass the Honoring Our PACT Act now!"

-Anthony Hardie, National Chair & Director, Veterans for Common Sense

This expansive bill would designate 23 types of respiratory diseases, including brain cancer – long sought by Gulf War advocates including VCS – along with two Agent Orange-related conditions to extend VA benefits to toxic-exposed veterans; expand VA healthcare to myriad toxic-exposed veterans not currently eligible for needed care; provide funding for dozens of new and expanded VA clinics around the country; and more.

The bill also includes provisions for veterans of the 1991 Gulf War long sought by Veterans for Common Sense, including:

- Permanently eliminating the expiration date for when Gulf War veterans can file claims with the VA.
- Mandating a single "disability benefits questionnaire" for Gulf War Illness to combat VA's near-total denial of Gulf War Illness disability claims.
- Mandating VA expand eligibility to Gulf War benefits to Gulf War veterans who served in five Middle Eastern countries where U.S. troops served as part of the Persian Gulf War Theatre of Operations but whom VA has since excluded, necessitating an Act of Congress so VA can no longer leave these veterans behind.
- Expanding eligibility to veterans of the Afghanistan War who VA has similarly left behind without an Act of Congress.