**UNDERSTANDING THE NEW PACT ACT**

The Senate amendment to *H.R. 3967, as amended, the* *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022,* passed the Senate 84-14. The PACT Act is comprehensive legislation to connect veterans who were exposed to burn pits or other dangerous toxins in service to our country with the healthcare and benefits they have earned.The CBO score for the bill is approximately $681 billion. That is significantly higher than the CBO score for the prior version of the bill that the House passed on March 3rd along a largely party-line vote of 256-174. CBO claims that the score of the initial House bill was incomplete because there was insufficient time to review it. While the cost of the Senate version of the PACT Act is undeniably high, it is a much better bill than the House-passed version and is now more targeted and bipartisan.

***The Senate version of the PACT Act codifies the scientific framework that VA is already using to provide benefits to toxic exposed veterans, better reflects current practice, and improves transparency.***

* The House-passed version of the PACT Act ignored the work that VA is already doing to improve services to toxic-exposed veterans. The Senate version codifies the pilot program that VA established last year to extend compensation benefits to toxic-exposed veterans and includes commonsense provisions to increase transparency, provide flexibility, and keep pace with scientific advancements regarding toxic exposure.

***The Senate version includes major medical facility lease authorizations, workforce enhancements, and other changes to ensure VA can improve services for toxic-exposed veterans without compromising care and benefits for other veterans. These total about $14 billion.***

* The House-passed version of the PACT Act failed to address the operational impact of improving services for toxic-exposed veterans, which could have left veterans waiting longer for health care and benefits. The Senate version includes provisions that address the operational impacts head-on.
* The lease and workforce enhancement provisions in the Senate version reflect VA and Congress’ top legislative priorities. Specifically, they would authorize 31 major medical facility leases outright (19 of which are in Republican districts), make it easier for Congress to authorize major medical facility leases nation-wide going forward, and improve VA’s ability to recruit and retain staff.

***The CBO score for the House-passed version of the PACT Act was incomplete, and the new score is artificially inflated.***

* In the House-passed version of the PACT Act, CBO scored $118 billion in new costs related to care, research, and the processing of disability claims for toxic-exposed veterans. However, CBO scored the Senate version with an additional $397 billion in existing discretionary healthcare costs that would now be moved to mandatory. That is, in large part, why the total score went from $325 billion to $681 billion.
* However, the new money that would leave the Treasury is just $285 billion and, considering only the costs of expanding care and benefits to toxic-exposed veterans, the Senate version of the PACT Act is about $40 billion less than the House-passed version.

***Committee Staff Contacts: Katie Smith - Benefits (******Katherine.Smith@mail.house.gov******); Christine Hill - Health (******Christine.Hill@mail.house.gov******); Bill Mallison - Budget (******Bill.Mallison@mail.house.gov******);***

***Samantha Gonzalez - Communications (***[***Samantha.Gonzalez@mail.house.gov***](file:///%5C%5Cus.house.gov%5Chcfs%5CVAR%5Ccommon%5CFull%20Committee%20117th%5CLegislation%5CSenate%20Version%20of%20PACT%20Act%5CCBO%20Score%5CSamantha.Gonzalez%40mail.house.gov)***)***