



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 10, 2022

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Susan J. Soloway, Commissioner

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Hunterdon County Veteran Services Officer Advises Commissioner Board About PACT Act 2022

Veteran Services Officer (VSO) Rich Booth recently advised the Commissioner Board about the bipartisan Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act or “PACT Act 2022” that was signed into law by President Biden on August 10, 2022.

VSO Booth said, “I have been following the news on the PACT Act since it went before the House of Representatives last year and was encouraged as amendments were made that allowed for expanded benefits to more than just those suffering from the toxic effects of burn pits.

For example, veterans exposed to radiation and prolonged water contamination, dating back to 1953, now have a new approval process through the VA to ensure veterans have access to the healthcare they need.”

Deputy Director Zach Rich said, “This legislation is an important step forward in support of our Veterans, and their survivors, nationwide. The PACT Act will honor our sacred obligation to our military men and women to help ensure they get the needed benefits they have earned and deserve including veterans who have disabilities resulting from military environmental exposure such as burn pits.”

VSO Booth recently sent out the annual Veterans Summer Newsletter and included PACT Act legislation information to keep county veterans informed.

“As Hunterdon County’s VSO I am responsible for guiding Veterans to the benefits they are eligible for and through continuing education and annual conferences, I can assist a Veteran, and his or her dependents, through the process of obtaining healthcare and other vital benefits,” Booth added.

Commissioner Susan J. Soloway added, “Many Veterans suffering from various chronic conditions were not covered with needed benefits because it was difficult to prove that their disability was a direct connection between military service and illness resulting from environmental exposures to contaminants. Removing this roadblock paves the way for our service men and woman to receive valuable service-connected health care benefits, screenings, and ongoing treatment.”



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The PACT Act 2022 covers:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- The legislation adds more than 23 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- The legislation will help improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures
- Allows veterans with presumptive illnesses associated with contaminated water at Camp Lejeune to file claims for service-connection disability compensation.

Additional information on the PACT Act and VA Benefits can be found at: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

In addition, any Veteran who has questions about this bill, or any other Veteran-related questions, can call VSO Booth at 908-788-1361, weekdays, 8:30am to 4pm.