



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



## NFFE News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NFFE Applauds Passage of Toxic Exposure Legislation Delivering Vital Resources to the VA and Expanding Care for Veterans

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) praises the U.S. Senate’s passage of the Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins (PACT) Act. Once signed into law by President Biden, the legislation will deliver high-quality Veterans Health Administration (VA) care and benefits to an additional 3.5 million veterans affected by toxic burn pits.

“As the most comprehensive toxic exposure legislation passed to date, this package ensures the federal government fulfills its duty to care for our military veterans,” said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “Millions of veterans and their families will now be able to access the incredible health care services provided by the VA, a benefit our heroes deserve for their sacrifices in protecting America.”

The PACT Act entitles veterans who served near burn pits to ten years of enhanced health care coverage through the VA after returning from military service. The legislation also directs the VA to presume that certain respiratory illnesses and cancers resulted from burn pit exposure, permitting veterans to receive disability payments for their injuries and illnesses.

Within the VA, PACT Act facilitates the establishment of 31 new health care clinics and expands training for personnel on toxic exposure in veterans. Further, the law promotes hiring and retention in rural areas and among critical VA positions, including incentives like raising the pay cap for certain roles and assisting with student loan repayments up to \$40,000 per year and \$100,000 per employee. NFFE will monitor the use and effectiveness of a questionable provision to direct hire college graduates and post-secondary students into the competitive service at or below the GS-11 level.

“This legislation is a tremendous achievement for generations of veterans who have been exposed to hazardous chemicals,” continued Erwin. “VA doctors and nurses across the country will now have the resources to provide world-class health care to millions of additional veterans. Thank you to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees for their leadership and commitment to passing this landmark legislation. NFFE looks forward to working with the Committees to ensure our veterans always receive the care they deserve for their service to our country.”

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*Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is America’s first union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents approximately 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to [www.nffe.org](http://www.nffe.org).*