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Senate Passes Bipartisan Bill to Help Veterans Exposed to Toxic Substances, Including Ross-Supported Camp Lejeune Justice Act (/press-releases?ID=0AA28EB5-A35D-4EDC-B275-95FB16A6E818)

June 16, 2022

Washington D.C.—Today, the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act* (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3967>), which will enable veterans exposed to toxic substances to receive proper benefits and care. The legislation includes the *Camp Lejeune Justice Act*, bipartisan legislation supported by Congresswoman Deborah Ross (NC-02) that gives affected veterans the opportunity to seek compensation for exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base in North Carolina. For decades, Marines and their families stationed at this base unknowingly consumed, bathed in, and used water containing harmful chemicals and industrial solvents. However, North Carolina law has

prevented them from seeking relief in court. The *Honoring Our PACT Act* corrects this injustice.

“North Carolina veterans put themselves in harm’s way to defend our nation, and we have a profound obligation to provide them with the resources they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives,” **said Congresswoman Ross**. “Too many servicemembers have been exposed to toxic substances while serving our country, only to return home without access to the care and benefits they deserve. I am especially grateful that this legislation will enable servicemembers from Camp Lejeune who were exposed to toxic chemicals at the base to finally pursue long-overdue justice in court. Our veterans and their families should not pay the price for congressional inaction. I’m glad we are setting our partisan differences aside to pass this urgently needed legislation, and I look forward to voting for it when comes back to the House.”

The *Honoring Our PACT Act*:

- provides access to VA health care to millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances;
- requires the VA to presume vets exposed rather than forcing vets to prove their exposure; and
- makes key improvements to streamline the VA's review processes for veterans to receive care for toxic exposure-related illnesses.

In March, a version of this bill passed the House, which included Congresswoman Ross’ amendment to support veterans exposed to PFAS. Now that the Senate-version of the legislation has passed, it is expected to come back to the House. Congresswoman Ross spoke in support of the legislation on the **House floor** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YOAeBNtGT4>).

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