

# ROA hails hard-fought PACT Act Senate victory (Updated)

*Landmark veterans battlefield toxicity bill on its way to the president after dogged grassroots veterans' advocacy turns the tide.*



WASHINGTON, DC, USA, August 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a momentous

win for veterans suffering from the effects of battlefield toxicity, such as burn pit fumes that have crippled and killed thousands, the Senate on Tuesday reconsidered and passed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act by an 86-11 margin, establishing service connections and the right to VA care for 23 cancers and maladies now linked to such toxins.

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The PACT Act's passage will mean lifesaving healthcare for our Citizen-Warriors -- men and women who serve shoulder to shoulder with their active duty comrades will get the care they earned.”

*Jeffrey Phillips, ROA*

“The Reserve and National Guard make up 40 percent of the total U.S. military and some 53 percent of the Army,” said [ROA's](#) executive director, retired Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips. “The passage of the PACT Act, which the president could sign into law as early as Monday, will mean lifesaving healthcare for our Citizen-Warriors -- men and women who have served shoulder to shoulder with their active duty comrades; they incurred the same risks, performed to the same levels of excellence, won the hard battles, and will get the care they earned.”

The victory bested the 84-14 margin achieved in the bill's initial June 16 passage, when a flaw was discovered in the bill's language that forced its reconsideration. A 24-hour vigil by veterans, many disabled and sickened by cancers and other maladies, fellow veterans, family members, veterans groups and members of the public began on the U.S. Capitol steps after a July 27 reconsideration failed.

“The show of resolve by veterans, veterans organizations, and citizens, widely shared on social and mass media, showed our resolve to get the PACT Act passed,” said Phillips. “ROA has been proud to be among this group. We will be vigilant in the campaign to ensure the government now follows through with the care intended by the Congress.” ROA notes that Secretary of

Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough has been a strong supporter of the bill.

ROA especially thanks the leadership of [Burn Pits 360](#) founder Rosie Torres, wife of retired Army Reserve Capt. Le Roy Torres, who was disabled by burn pit fumes on his 2007 Iraq deployment. Torres lost his job with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the state's supreme court refused to hear his case. A June 29 win in the U.S. Supreme Court, which ROA was credited with helping achieve, has granted Torres the right to sue his state government for redress.

"Rosie Torres has fought like a tiger. Today she savors victory, hard-won and bittersweet victory, as her beloved husband fights for his health after serving his nation in war," said Phillips.

ROA thanks comedian-turned activist Jon Stewart and John Feal of the [FealGood Foundation](#) for their dogged and effective support in the fight for the bill's passage.

Recognizing the unflagging championship of Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester (MT) and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (KS), as well as Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (NY), ROA sends a grateful salute. Recognition also goes to all senators who voted for the PACT Act yesterday, with a nod to those senators who listened to the message of the past week's vigil and recast their opposition to a vote of support.

The Washington, DC-based Reserve Organization of America, founded in 1922 and chartered by Congress in 1950, is the only national military organization that solely and exclusively advocates for strong Reserves and National Guard forces as essential components of our national security.

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