

Burn Pits 360 Announces Full 2026 Gala of Valor Honoree Slate, Ticket Promotion in Honor of Hispanic Heritage Month

Reps. Juan Ciscomani and Chris Pappas to be recognized for the AIR CARE for Vets Act

SAN ANTONIO, TX, UNITED STATES, September 11, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Burn Pits 360 today announced the full slate of honorees for the 2026 [Gala of Valor](#), its signature annual benefit, to be held Saturday, Oct. 17, at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa. The organization also introduced a new award, the Burn Pits 360 Congressional Advocacy Award for Veterans Health, recognizing lawmakers whose legislative work has advanced the health and diagnosis of toxic-exposed veterans.

Themed "Where Heritage Meets Heroism," in honor of items accepted by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino earlier this year, the evening opens with a cocktail reception and Sip and Shop marketplace, followed by dinner, a live and silent auction, and an awards program recognizing the advocates, clinicians, researchers, journalists and volunteers who have advanced care and accountability for the toxic-exposed community. Attire is Texas formal, Spanish chic.

"These are the people who refused to look away," said Rosie Torres, executive director and co-founder of Burn Pits 360. "Lawmakers who wrote the bills. Doctors who documented what the government would not. Journalists who kept asking. Volunteers who showed up on the hardest days. Honoring them is how we tell the next generation of advocates that the work matters."

A NEW AWARD FOR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ON VETERANS HEALTH



The graphic features a background image of a formal gala event with warm lighting, floral arrangements, and a "Gala OF VALOR" logo. Overlaid text includes:

- HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH TICKETS**
- \$300** per guest
- General Admission Only (no assigned seating).
- DISCOUNTED FROM NOW TO SEPT. 30
- GALAOFVALOR.ORG**
- Saturday, October 17, 2026
JW Marriott Hill Country · San Antonio

Now until Sept. 30, 2026 tickets are \$300

The Burn Pits 360 Congressional Advocacy Award for Veterans Health honors members of Congress whose legislative leadership has made a meaningful and lasting impact on the health, well-being and future of the veteran community — lawmakers who have gone beyond statements of support to introduce, co-author or champion bipartisan bills that expand access to care, improve diagnosis and address the long-term health consequences of toxic exposure.

The inaugural recipients are U.S. Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ) and U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH), co-authors of the AIR CARE for Vets Act. The legislation builds on the foundation of the Honoring Our PACT Act by working to bring advanced 4D lung imaging technology into VA medical facilities — pairing the toxic exposure screenings the PACT Act mandated with the diagnostic tools needed to detect disease earlier and more accurately.

"The PACT Act got veterans screened. The next fight is making sure those screenings can actually find what is wrong," Torres said. "That is what this award is for."

2026 GALA OF VALOR HONOREES

- Burn Pits 360 will present the following awards:
- SFC Heath Robinson PACT Act Service Award — Gov. Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey (appearing virtually); U.S. Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA); U.S. Rep. Morgan Luttrell (R-TX)
- Burn Pits 360 Congressional Advocacy Award for Veterans Health — U.S. Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ) and U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH)
- Capt. Le Roy Torres Justice Defender Award — Lt. Col. Brian Lawler, USMC (Ret.), Pilot Law, P.C.
- PACT Act Veterans Champion Award — Andreas Fouras, Ph.D., founder and CEO, 4DMedical
- PACT Act Defenders of Valor Award — Rick Kell, co-founder and executive director, Feherty's Troops First Foundation
- Amie Muller Research Award — Anthony Szema, M.D.
- Ground Zero Warfighter Legacy Award — David Prezant, M.D., chief medical officer, Fire Department of the City of New York (appearing virtually)
- PACT Act Pioneers Award — Kerry Baker, senior appellate counsel, Hill & Ponton
- PACT Act Trailblazer in Truth Journalism Award — Jake Tapper, chief Washington anchor, CNN (appearing virtually)
- PACT Act Vanguard Award — Denis McDonough, 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Burn Pits 360 Advocate of the Year Award — Col. David W. Sutherland, U.S. Army (Ret.), chairman, Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services
- Burn Pits 360 Corporate Legacy Award — The Lamantia Family and L&F Distributors
- Burn Pits 360 Volunteer of the Year Award — Carlos and Sylvia Avila; John Pizana
- The Oscar Wyatt Legacy of Valor Award — To be announced

Individual tickets and tables are on sale now at galaofvalor.org.

About Burn Pits 360

Burn Pits 360 is a Texas-based national nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring and empowering veterans, first responders and their families affected by toxic exposures. Founded

by Capt. Le Roy Torres and Rosie Torres, the organization works through education, advocacy, community support and policy engagement to drive long-overdue care, recognition and accountability for exposure-related illnesses. For more information, visit www.burnpits360.org.

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