



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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March 3, 2022

Dear Representative:

We are writing to you as the executive officers of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), a union representing upwards of 90,000 professional employees in the federal, public, and private sector, to urge you to vote for the bipartisan *Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act (Honoring Our PACT Act)*, H.R. 3967.

For decades now, too many veterans who have illness and disabilities from toxic exposure have been wrongly denied care and benefits. The *Honoring Our PACT Act* is widely recognized by veterans and veteran service organizations as legislation that would correct a grave and ongoing error by providing overdue and necessary healthcare – including mental health services – and disability benefits to as many as 3.5 million veterans with service-connected exposure to toxins, burn pits, and other hazardous material.

The *Honoring Our PACT Act* establishes a presumption of service connection for 23 illnesses and disabilities resulting from airborne exposure, a presumption of exposure to radiation, expands presumption for Agent Orange exposure, streamlines access and eligibility to benefits for affected veterans, requires the VA to implement standardized training on presumption of airborne toxic exposure and conduct outreach for veterans and caregivers, and improves data collection and analysis of illnesses and treatment related to toxic exposure.

For IFPTE, veterans' issues are our members' issues. Many veterans who are IFPTE members are involved in the IFPTE Veterans Committee. Our membership includes veterans and reservists working in the federal government, including at the Department of Navy, Army Corps of Engineers, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Social Security Administration, DOJ, NASA, in the private sector at the Boeing Company, General Electric, Spirit AeroSystems, and in state and local governments in New Jersey, Northern California, and in so many other places. IFPTE households and our members' families include veterans, active-duty service members, and reservists. This legislation is about fulfilling a commitment to Americans who have served and sacrificed for our nation, Americans who are a part of our communities, our families, and our union. The least we can do is provide necessary care and benefits to veterans and future veterans who may suffer from illnesses and injuries that result from their service.

Finally, we commend President Biden for calling on Congress during his State of the Union address to "make sure veterans devastated by toxic exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan finally get the benefits and the comprehensive health care that they deserve." We are encouraged by the bipartisan support among Members of Congress for President Biden's plea for swift action on this important legislation.

For all these reasons, we request you vote for the *Honoring Our PACT* Act to ensure that veterans have benefits, support, and the care they require provided without delay. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact IFPTE Legislative Director Faraz Khan at 202-239-4892 or fkhan@ifpte.org.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Biggs
IFPTE President



Gay Henson
IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer

