

# Attorney General Raoul Urges Congress To Pass The PACT Act

August 3 2022 9:28 AM



CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul led a coalition of nine attorneys general urging the U.S. Senate to pass proposed legislation that would expand health care coverage to millions of veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other military toxins.

[In a letter to Senators Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell](#), Raoul and the coalition urge passage of [S. 3373](#), which would expand health care eligibility to post-Sept. 11 combat veterans, including more than 3.5 million veterans exposed to toxins. The proposal would also add 23 burn pit and toxic exposure-related conditions to the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs' list of service connection presumptions, and create a framework for the establishment of future presumptions of service connection related to toxic exposure. Raoul and the coalition are calling for the passage of S. 3373, the PACT Act, after the measure failed to pass the U.S. Senate when it was called for a vote July 27.

“Veterans risked their lives in defense of our country, and too many suffer from long-term health conditions after being exposed to toxins during their service. It is past time the federal government kept its promise to the brave men and women who have made

sacrifices many of us cannot imagine,” Raoul said. “I urge the U.S. Senate to take action today and show America’s veterans that our commitment to them doesn’t stop when their deployment ends.”

For decades, the Department of Defense (DOD) utilized open-air burn pits to dispose of garbage, paint, plastics, jet fuel and human waste generated on military bases overseas. The burning of these contaminants released an array of pollutants into the air, including known carcinogens and particulate matter. Active burn pits existed as recently as the military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the DOD has now closed most burn pits, closure has not prevented veterans from becoming ill years after exposure. Medical conditions linked to burn pit exposure include a host of cancers affecting the head, neck, kidneys, brain and pancreas. They have also resulted in veterans being diagnosed with emphysema and asthma after service.

Attorney General Raoul’s Military and Veterans Rights Bureau handles a wide variety of financial and legal concerns affecting service members and veterans, such as military employment rights, consumer fraud and scams connected with benefits provided by the VA. Military service members, veterans and their families can visit Raoul’s [Military and Veterans Rights Bureau website](#) or contact Raoul's Military and Veterans Rights Helpline for assistance by email at [mvrb@ilag.gov](mailto:mvrb@ilag.gov) or by calling 1-800-382-3000 or 1-800-964-3013 (TTY). Service members and veterans who believe they have been a victim of a fraud can also contact the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Bureau at 1-800-386-5438 in Chicago, 1-800-243-0618 in Springfield and 1-800-243-0607 in Carbondale.

Joining Raoul in signing the letter are the attorneys general of California, Delaware, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.