

# **Sen. Duckworth Urges Veterans to Apply for PACT Act Benefits Before Deadline**

September 27 2023 3:35 PM



ILLINOIS - Ahead of the Sept. 30 deadline, combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) is urging all post-9/11 Veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service to apply for free healthcare and benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s one-year special open enrollment period.

These new, expanded benefits for post-9/11 Veterans discharged more than 10 years ago were established under the PACT Act. A video of Senator Duckworth urging Veterans to apply can be found [here](#).

“After bravely serving our nation, too many Veterans come home to discover years later that their service has left them with respiratory and neurological issues due to burn pits or other toxic exposure, making them more vulnerable to serious illnesses,” said Duckworth. “The impact of toxic exposure can show up years after service, so I encourage all eligible Veterans — even those who think they do not have symptoms — to take advantage and enroll in benefits before the Sept. 30 deadline.”

The PACT Act helped expand VA care for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances, creating a one-year special enrollment period for post-9/11 combat Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA healthcare. Veterans who are interested in applying before the Sept. 30 deadline should visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) to submit an application or contact Senator Duckworth’s office for assistance and questions on enrollment.

Duckworth is a combat Veteran who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years. She is also a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee.