



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham issues statement On President Biden signing the PACT Act

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Wednesday issued the following statement after President Joe Biden signed into law the PACT Act.

“On this historic day, America is keeping its promise to our veterans, providing our five million servicemen and women veterans exposed to burn pits and toxic substances the health care and benefits they deserve. This is an issue that I worked on extensively during my time in Congress, and I am grateful to President Biden and the Congressional Delegation in getting this critical legislation across the finish line. I also want to thank former New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall, who was integral to efforts to pass initial legislation around burn pits.

"So many courageous veterans fought for passage of the PACT Act. Today, I want to highlight one heroic and dedicated New Mexico veteran and his family that I have worked with for many years. On behalf of the state of New Mexico, I want to personally thank New Mexico Air Force National Guard Master Sergeant Jessey Baca and his wife Maria, who have been tireless in their commitment to passing this bill and advocating for fellow veterans. As a result of his exposure to a burn pit in Iraq, Jessey now suffers from constrictive bronchiolitis and other respiratory ailments. He has been willing to tell his story and that story has truly inspired a nation. Master Sergeant Baca, we salute you for a job well done.

"New Mexico is home to over 135,000 veterans and we owe a debt of gratitude to each one. Today, we take one more step to make sure all our veterans have the support, healthcare, benefits and thanks they so deserve – and I will continue that fight here in New Mexico.”

Jessey and Maria Baca also issued a statement:

“It has been a long road to get to this point and it has taken a team of dedicated service members, families and public servants to get us here. We are grateful for all of the support, especially from Gov. Lujan Grisham during her time in Congress, during which time she was a champion of veterans at large and those suffering after exposure to burn pits. These veterans have suffered immensely, and we are thankful to the Congressional Delegation for their support and to President Biden and for signing legislation to help make us whole.”

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gov. Lujan Grisham was a staunch supporter of veterans affected by burn pits, including as a cosponsor of the Burn Pits Registry Act which became law as part of the 2013 NDAA, Burn Pits Accountability Act, Helping Veterans Exposed to Toxic Chemicals Act, Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2016, and the Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act, as well as other burn pit-related NDAA provisions.

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