



**Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**DVS, VA to Host PACT Act Town Hall Meeting**

**Thursday, October 6 (10 a.m.-noon)**

Albuquerque

National Hispanic Cultural Center (1701 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW)

**(Albuquerque)**—The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the Albuquerque VA Regional Office (VARO) will host a *PACT Act* town hall meeting in Albuquerque on October 6.

The meeting will be from 10 a.m.-noon at the National Hispanic Cultural Center's Bank of America Auditorium, located at 1701 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, and is open to military veterans, active service members, and their families. There is plenty of free parking at the center.

There is also a [virtual/online](#) and phone option (1-833-558-0712) to log in and listen to the presentations.

For more information about this town hall meeting, please call (505) 383-2400.

**What is the PACT Act?**

On August 10, President Joe Biden signed into law the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson *Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022* to recognize health issues and provide VA health care for veterans who've served since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Many of these veterans have been denied VA health care for post-service health issues they've long claimed were caused by exposure to toxic chemicals from "burn pits" and other service-related sources.

Burn pits are large holes dug into the ground that the U.S. commonly used in Iraq, Afghanistan and other overseas locations to dispose of waste collected on military bases. That included items that produced dangerous toxic smoke when burned, such as plastics, rubber, chemical mixtures and medical waste.

The PACT Act removes an eligible veteran's burden of proof when filing a medical claim—giving them the benefit of doubt. It also expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Vietnam War era veterans exposed to the *Agent Orange* herbicide and other toxic chemicals.

The new law also features *the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022*. This provision allows individuals to sue the U.S. government to recover damages for harm caused by exposure to contaminated water at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987.

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### **The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services**

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) provides support and services to New Mexico's 148,000 veterans and their families. DVS treats every veteran, regardless of their rank achieved during military service, with the respect and gratitude befitting someone who has served our country. We strive every day to live up to our agency's official motto: *Serving Those Who Served*.