

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2025

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our serious concern over the June 15, 2025, memorandum issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and signed by you on September 30, 2025, which removes male breast cancer from the list of presumptive conditions covered under the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.¹ This recommendation would reverse a science-based decision made by VA to recognize male breast cancer as a presumptive condition caused by toxic exposure. This change will deny many veterans timely access to care and benefits, despite strong evidence that exposure to burn pits and other toxins increases cancer risk in both men and women.

Following the passage of the PACT Act, which included reproductive cancers as a presumptive condition following service-connected toxic exposure, VA determined that reproductive cancers referenced in the bill text should include male breast cancer and announced that it would be considered a presumptive condition in June 2024.² This was done in an effort to ensure as many veterans as possible could receive timely access to care and benefits under the PACT Act. Given that veterans are considered a higher-risk group for developing male breast cancer compared to their civilian counterparts, we remain seriously concerned that VA would suddenly change this interpretation of the PACT Act.

Incidences of male breast cancer, while thankfully rare, have risen in recent years and are increasingly linked to toxic exposure. In fact, because it is uncommon and awareness of risk factors and symptoms remains low, men with breast cancer tend to receive later-stage diagnoses and have worse outcomes compared to women. Research using VA's own data demonstrates the importance of ensuring veterans can quickly access care. A 2021 study on gender disparities in veterans with breast cancer found that male veterans receive breast cancer diagnoses at an older age and present with later disease stages than women veterans who receive breast cancer diagnoses.³ In the treatment of diseases where more timely access to care can mean all the difference in ensuring positive outcomes, VA's decision to remove male breast cancer as a presumptive condition exists in contradiction to the goals of the PACT Act.

¹Pub. L. 117-168 (2022).

²Department of Veterans Affairs, *Processing Claims Under the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, or the Honoring Our Pact Act of 2022* (89 FR 51224) (June 17, 2024).

³Aggarwal A., et al., *Gender Disparity in Breast Cancer: A Veteran Population-Based Comparison*, *Clinical Breast Cancer*, Vol. 21, 4 (2021).

Moreover, the removal of male breast cancer as a presumptive condition under the PACT Act, in an effort to adhere to the misguided Executive Order 14168, is an insult to veterans and their service and sacrifice.⁴ VA should not engage in the practice of changing previous determinations based solely on political agendas, as it has done in this case. The uncertainty and complications that this decision will cause to veterans who may be diagnosed with male breast cancer is unconscionable, not to mention the dangerous precedent it creates.

While additional research is needed into the causes and risk factors of male breast cancer, there can be no question that there are significant similarities between breast cancer in both men and women, and that causes of male breast cancer include interactions of sex hormones such as estrogen. In the absence of further, rigorous scientific evaluation, there is no scientific basis to determine that male breast cancer should **not** be considered a reproductive cancer simply because the male breast “lacks reproductive value,” as the memorandum supposes.

It is clear with this decision that VA has callously put political calculations and adherence to unscientific executive orders above its obligations to provide care to veterans. It is imperative that you reverse course, continue providing care and benefits for those diagnosed with male breast cancer, and cease any current or future erosion of the benefits veterans have earned under the PACT Act.

Additionally, we respectfully insist that you provide the following information to the signatories of this letter, no later than close of business on November 28, 2025:

1. Please provide the data inputs, including any analysis or review performed by VA or any external entity, that the Department used to make the determination to remove male breast cancer as a presumptive condition under the PACT Act. If any literature reviews were completed, please provide a complete list of all publications that were reviewed.
2. Provide the number of veterans who have in the past or are now receiving treatment for male breast cancer since August 10, 2022, as well as any projections regarding future veterans in this cohort.
3. Provide the number of veterans who have filed a disability compensation claim for male breast cancer since August 10, 2022, disaggregated by pending, approval, or denial status.
4. Please provide a list of Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration, and VA Central Office staff who participated in the drafting and approval of the June 15, 2025, memo removing male breast cancer from the list of presumptive conditions covered under the PACT Act.

Cancer does not care about ideology, and neither should the agency charged with caring for those who served. The PACT Act is the law — not a suggestion — and it requires VA to follow the evidence, not executive orders that distort science for politics. No one who risked their life for this country should have to wonder if their diagnosis fits an administration’s political comfort

⁴ Exec. Order 14168, 90 FR 8615, *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government* (Jan. 20, 2025) (available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/30/2025-02090/defending-women-from-gender-ideology-extremism-and-restoring-biological-truth-to-the-federal>).

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zone. We demand you immediately reverse this decision and restore male breast cancer as a presumptive condition under the PACT Act, as Congress intended.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Veterans' Affairs



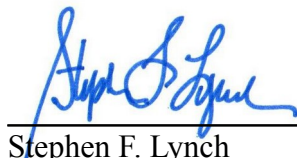
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



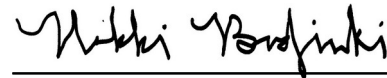
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



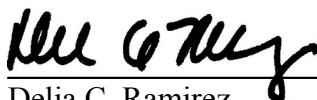
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



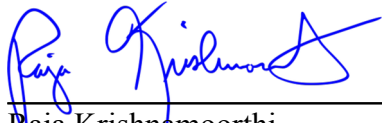
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



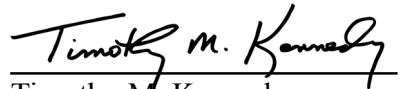
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



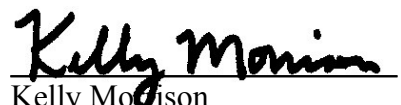
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



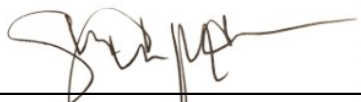
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



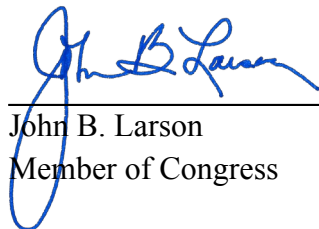
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress