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2022 NACo

# LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 12-16 | WASHINGTON HILTON | WASHINGTON, D.C.





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## Veterans and Military Services Committee Meeting

February 13, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM | International Ballroom East

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## Agenda

1:00 PM | Call to Order and Welcome

1:05 PM | Federal Priorities for Serving Veterans in 2022

1:45 PM | Arts and Creative Arts Therapies for Greater Health and Well-being for Veterans

2:00 PM | Getting to Functional Zero in the Wake of Covid-19

2:50 PM | The Veterans Services Landscape: Update from the Ground

3:05 PM | Legislative Update for Counties

3:15 PM | Final Remarks

3:30 PM | Meeting Concludes



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## *Welcome & Introductions*





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*Please stand for the Pledge of  
Allegiance*





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## Veterans & Military Services Committee Leadership

### *Chair*

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Hon. Thomas Snider | Supervisor, Winnebago County, WI

### *Vice Chairs*

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Hon. Bill Holen | Commissioner, Arapahoe County, CO

Hon. Chris Lukasevich | Commissioner, Carbon County, PA

Hon. Christopher Paasch | Commissioner, Curry County, OR

Hon. Steve Bradshaw | Commissioner, DeKalb County, GA

Hon. Trista Matascastillo | Commissioner, Ramsey County, MN

Hon. Demarcus Marshall | Commissioner, Lowndes County, GA

Hon. Heather Post | Councilwoman, Volusia County, FL

Mr. Jason Skinner | Director of VSA, Livingston County, NY

Mr. Herman Breuer | Immediate Past President, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers

Ms. Claudia Tuck | Director, Community Support Services, Alachua County, FL

Ms. Cathrene Nichols | Director, Spokane County Regional Veterans Services, Spokane County, WA



## Housekeeping

- Please stay masked unless actively eating or drinking
- Use standing microphones for questions/comments
- Virtual attendees can “raise hand” or type questions or comments into the chat

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## Honoring Tom Snider and Announcing New Veterans Committee Chair



Hon. Larry Johnson  
President, NACo  
Commissioner, DeKalb County, Ga.





## Federal Priorities for Serving Veterans in 2022



Hon. Donald M. Remy

Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

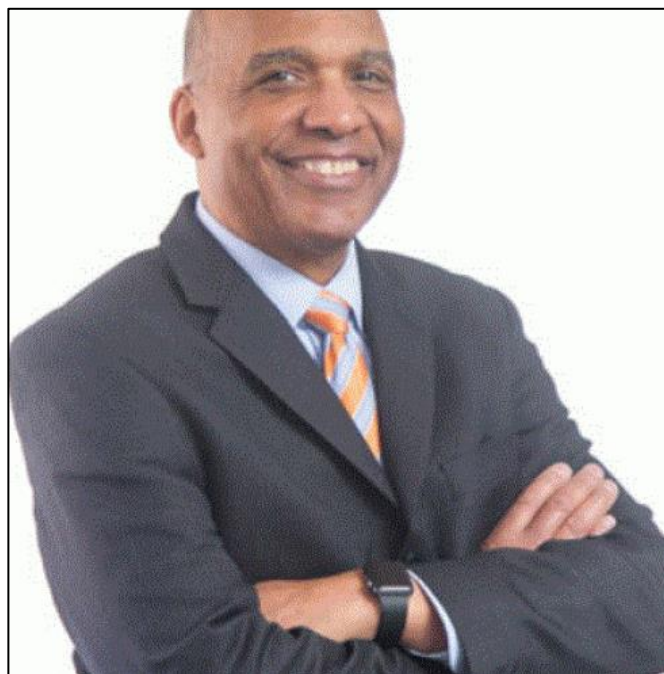


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## Arts and Creative Arts Therapies for Greater Health and Well-being for Veterans



Mr. Nolen Bivens

Chief Executive Officer, Americans for the Arts



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## Getting to Functional Zero in the Wake of Covid-19



**Ms. Kathryn Monet**  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Coalition for  
Homeless Veterans (NCHV)



**Ms. Claudia Tuck**  
Director of Community Support  
Services, Alachua County, Florida  
Vice Chair, NACo Veterans and  
Military Services Committee



**Ms. Tess Wrzesinski**  
Professional Staff Member  
(Majority)  
U.S. Senate Committee on  
Veterans Affairs



**Dr. Nicholas Armstrong, Ph.D.**  
Managing Director for  
Research and Data  
Syracuse Institute for Veterans  
and Military Families





## The Veterans Services Landscape: Update from the Ground



Mr. Herm Breuer

Immediate Past President, NACVSO

Vice Chair, NACo Veterans and Military Services Committee



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## Legislative Update for Counties

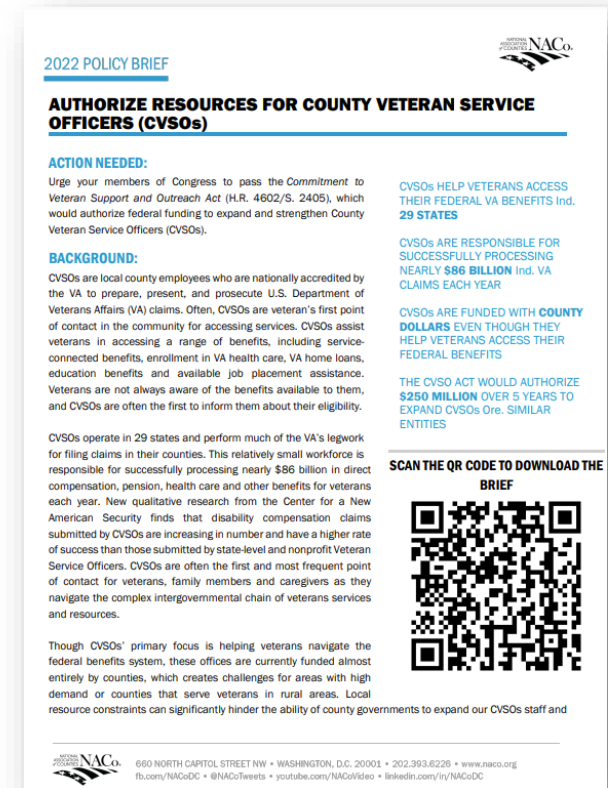


Ms. Rachel Mackey  
Associate Legislative Director  
NACo



## Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

- H.R. 4601/S. 2405
- Key NACo priority
- \$250 million over 5 years
  - *Competitive grants to states*
  - *Funds must expand CVSOs or similar local entities*
  - *VA must prioritize areas with high rates of veteran suicide, CVSO shortages, or high rates of Veterans Crisis Line referrals*



## Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

### ■ Latest activity:

- *House and Senate hearings*
- *Potential changes based on VA feedback*

### ■ Action needed:

- *Additional bipartisan cosponsors in House and Senate*
- *Use [NACo's template letter](#) to express support or thank them for cosponsoring*

#### Happy Veterans Day from NACo

County leaders are serving our nation's veterans – welcoming newly separated service members into our communities, promoting access to stable housing, employment and education, delivering critical mental health services that treat trauma and prevent suicide, and funding County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) to help veterans claim their federal benefits.



The National Association of Counties (NACo) is proud to unite county officials who are committed to implementing best practices and informing policies that help our nation's military, veterans and their families thrive.

*WATCH: Message from NACo President Larry Johnson & National Association of County Veterans Service Officers Past President Herm Breuer*

#### Urge Your Members of Congress to Pass the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act

The bipartisan CVSO Act (H.R. 4601/S. 2405) would strengthen county efforts to help veterans access federal service-connected health, pension and disability benefits. Specifically, the legislation would:

- Authorize \$50 million annually from Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 through FY 2026 for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to award competitive grants to states to strengthen and expand CVSOs or similar local entities, including hiring and training additional CVSOs
- Direct the VA to prioritize grants for areas with a critical shortage of county or tribal veterans service officers, areas with high rates of suicide among veterans, and areas with high rates of referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line
- Direct the VA Secretary to develop guidance for outcome measures related to the goals of increased uptake of veterans' benefits and increasing the number of VA accredited CVSOs in a given state

The CVSO Act would represent a historic federal investment in this key county workforce and help us better serve our veterans. **This Veterans Day, please contact your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and urge them to co-sponsor and pass the CVSO Act. You can also show your support for the legislation using NACo's social media templates.**

CONTACT YOUR  
REPRESENTATIVE

CONTACT YOUR  
SENATORS

TEMPLATE  
LETTER



## CVSO Act: Current House Cosponsors

Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA-49)

Rep. Bill Keating (D-MA-09)

Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI-03)

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20)

Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20)

Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL-10)

Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO-07)

Rep. Scott Peter (D-CA-52)

Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MN-03)

Rep. Joe Morelle (D-NY-25)

Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH-13)

Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-MT-At Large)

Rep. Young Kim (R-CA-39)

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01)

Rep. Andrew Garbarino (R-NY-02)

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI-08)

Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC-08)

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-MN-07)

Rep. John Katko (R-NY-24)

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-05)

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21)



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## CVSO Act: Current Senate Cosponsors

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)



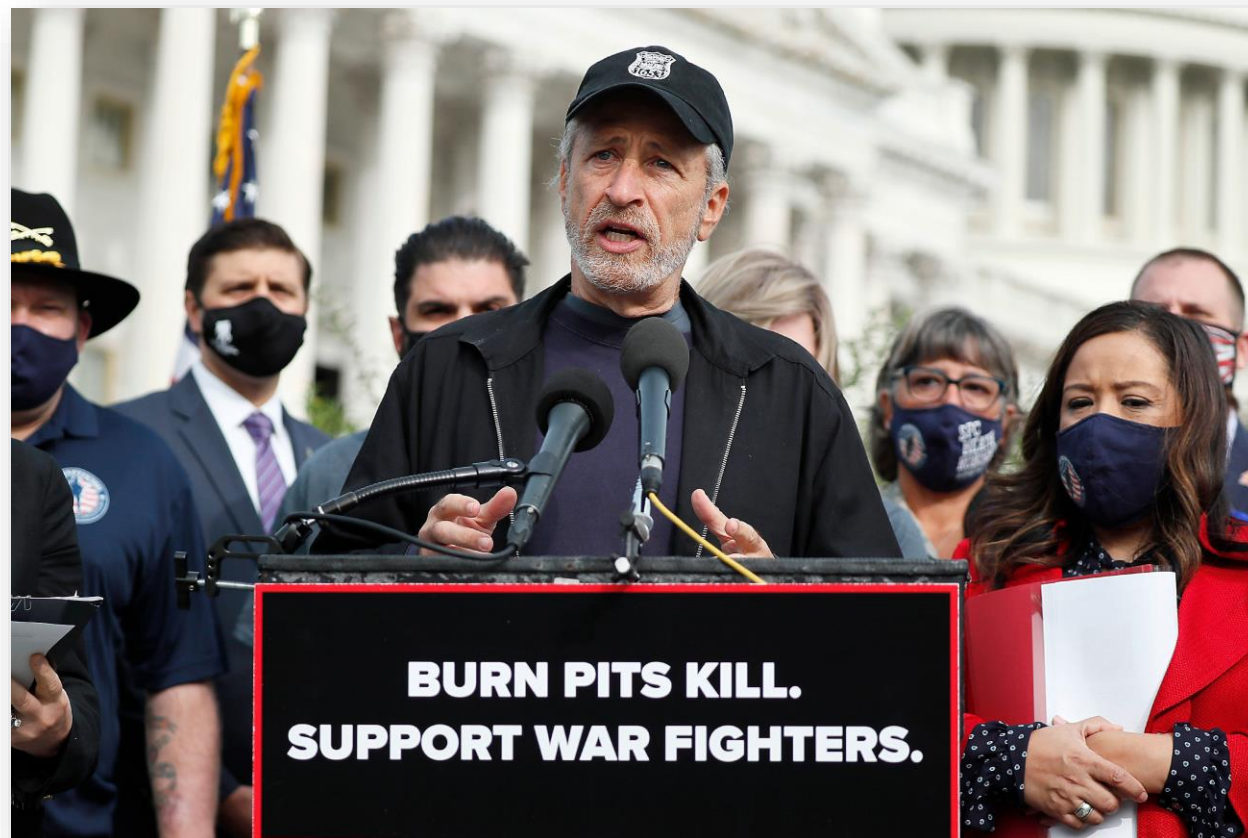
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## Toxic Exposure

**Adopted Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass legislation ensuring veterans who served near burn pits receive VA health coverage and disability benefits for associated medical conditions by eliminating or easing the direct service connection requirement and investing in additional research.

Adopted July, 2021







## Toxic Exposure

- *Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2021 (H.R. 3967)*
  - *Passed HVAC 14-11*
  - *80 Cosponsors (77 Democrats, 3 Republicans)*
- *Comprehensive and Overdue Support for Troops (COST) of War Act of 2021 (S. 3003)*

- **Grant VA health care enrollment eligibility** to any veteran who suffered toxic exposures while in service
- **Create a list of presumptive disabilities (23 conditions)** for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances
- **Concede exposure** to burn pits and other airborne hazards for veterans who served in certain areas
- **Ensure VA adopts a framework** to establish new presumptive disabilities for ALL exposures in a timely manner based on scientific data
- **Develop a training module** for VA providers and benefits personnel
- **Require a toxic exposure questionnaire** at the beginning of every VA primary care appointment



## Toxic Exposure

- *Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act (S. 3541)*
  - *\$1 billion over 10 years*
  - *Less Comprehensive*
  - *Passed Senate unanimously*
- **Create a one-year enrollment period** for VA medical care for post-9/11 combat veterans who served after 1998 and never enrolled
- **Extend the enrollment period** for all formerly deployed post-9/11 combat vets from five years to 10.
- **Direct the Department of Veterans Affairs** to incorporate toxic exposure clinical screening for veterans
- **Mandate education and training** for department personnel on identifying, treating, and assessing the impact of toxic exposure



## Toxic Exposure

- Administration Pilot Program
  - *VA reviewing research into several rare cancers to fast track to health care and disability compensation for veterans*
  - *Expanding training for VA and non-VA health providers.*

Salute to Veterans

### **Benefits for military burn pit victims could expand dramatically under White House plan**

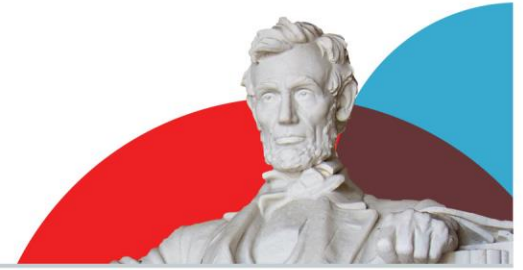
By [Leo Shane III](#)

Nov 11, 2021



## Transitioning Service Members

- Proposed Interim Resolution encouraging increased coordination between DOD, VA, SDVAs and CVSOs/TVSOs
  - *Proactive dissemination of DD-214 records*
  - *Passed the Human Services and Education Policy Steering Committee unanimously*
  - *Final board vote on Monday, Feb. 14*



## Upcoming Conference Events

### MONDAY, FEB 14

- Federal Agency Meet and Greet | 8:00 am – 12:00 pm | Concourse Foyer
- General Session | 9:00 am – 10:30 am | International Ballroom
- Strengthening Anti-Hunger Priorities in the 2023 Farm Bill | 10:45 am – 11:45 am | Columbia 11 & 12
- Someone to Call: Reimagining the County Crisis Response System through 988 Implementation | 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm | Columbia 9 & 10

### TUESDAY, FEB 15

- Navigating Federal Resources to Improve Rural COVID-19 Response Efforts | 8:00-9:15 am | Columbia 9 & 10
- General Session | 9:30 am – 11:45 am | International Ballroom
- Presidential Address to County Officials | 1:00 – 2:00 pm | International Ballroom





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## NACo Staff Contact:

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Services and Education

[rmackey@naco.org](mailto:rmackey@naco.org)



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