

THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Statement on Take Care of America's Veterans Act

The American people asked our veterans to sacrifice for our country. Their sacrifices have placed a lasting burden not only on their physical and mental well-being, but also on the well-being of their families and loved ones. The commitment our veterans made when they raised their right hand contained no expiration date, and neither should the promise made to them by the American people. To truly take care of America's Veteran, our country should not keep the promise to one group of Veterans while narrowing the promise to another.

For this reason, the Marine Corps League does not support this bill as currently drafted, particularly Section 108. While the bill is well intended and contains many provisions we support, Section 108 would effectively reduce disability compensation for future claims involving obstructive sleep apnea and tinnitus. These conditions are especially common to our Marines, FMF personnel, and other Veterans whose service involved toxic and environmental exposures, weapons-fire, aircraft and artillery noise, blast overpressure, and a wide variety of related experiences.

If a reformation of rating schedule for sleep apnea and tinnitus is needed, that discussion should occur separately, through a transparent and science-based process with full participation from Veterans Service Organizations, medical experts, and affected Veterans. Any reformation of VA rating schedule has serious impact to veterans benefits and should not be inserted into a comprehensive veterans' benefits package to offset for other earned benefits.

Therefore, Marine Corps League urges Congress to remove Section 108 from the final legislative package and pass the remaining, strongly written Bill in the same manner as the PACT Act was passed.

Marines live by *Semper Fidelis*, "always faithful", to country, Corps, and one another. The American people made a promise to all who served, and our nation should honor the same spirit of what we ask of those who are willing to wear the uniform.