



It's been a busy week in Washington, D.C.

Earlier today, President Biden said he is confident congressional leaders can reach a deal to raise the nation's borrowing limit before the country faces a default. We hope this week's discussions prove fruitful and demonstrate the "good faith" assured by leadership.

AMVETS testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee yesterday regarding the PACT Act. Special shout out to our National Service Director Michael Black for his hard work and testimony educating Congress on how this legislation impacts our country's veterans.

This week, the total number of claims from veterans under the PACT Act reached 250 thousand. This is a massive step forward for the VA and the veterans we represent.

A proposal to raise VA's budget for next year has been introduced, bumping discretionary spending by \$18 billion. We will monitor this situation as it develops.

We will continue to keep our eye on the ball as more updates roll out. Hope you have a great week.

With high regard,

-Paul Shipley, AMVETS National Third Vice Commander



AMVETS National Service Director Michael Black gave testimony to the House Veterans Affairs Committee regarding the implementation of the PACT Act on Tuesday, May 16. To view his written statement or watch his full testimony, click [here](#).

## News Driving the Week

President Biden and Congress [failed to reach an agreement](#) on the debt ceiling this Tuesday, prompting more meetings today. Biden says he is "confident" that a deal will come from today's discussions. House Democrats have launched a "[discharge petition](#)" to bypass regular procedures in the chamber if these conversations continue to stall out. This will allow them to raise the U.S. debt limit if necessary to avoid a default.

Despite ongoing debt ceiling concerns, Republicans [released a proposal](#) on Tuesday for an \$18 billion budget bump next year for the VA. This would give the VA about \$153 billion in discretionary funding in 2024, up from \$135 billion it got this year.

A new [analysis from the Center for American Progress](#) shows the potential consequences of a default for veterans and their families across the country. The study finds that delays in payments and health care delays for veterans and their dependents.

The VA has renewed Oracle Cerner's electronic health record (EHR) modernization contract despite five years of [rollout challenges and performance problems](#) that have impacted veterans' care. The renegotiated contract aims "to deliver the high-functioning, high-reliability, world-class electronic health record that Veterans deserve."

On Tuesday, the VA announced that over 250,000 [claims from veterans](#) for PACT Act benefits have been processed since the law was enacted last August. The VA appeared before the [House Veterans Affairs Committee](#) along with representatives from AMVETS, the Wounded Warrior Project, and the Service Women's Action Network. They discussed the impact of the PACT Act and how its implementation can be improved moving forward.

Earlier this week, it was reported that nearly two dozen [homeless veterans were relocated from a hotel](#) they were staying in to accommodate the influx of migrants. Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus said around 20 veterans who were living there had to be moved to another hotel to make room for the asylum seekers who were bussed in from New York City.

A study was released that found Marines stationed at Camp Lejeune had a 70 percent [higher risk of Parkinson's disease](#) than veterans who served at a post across the country. The risk of developing this nervous system disorder could impact millions more servicemembers and their families.

## This Week's Events

### House Veterans Affairs Committee

The Transition Assistance Program: Steps to Ensure Success for Servicemembers as They Enter Civilian Life

May 17th @ 3pm

[More information HERE](#)

VHA Recruitment and Retention: Is Bureaucracy Holding Back a Quality Workforce?

May 17th @ 10:30am

[Watch recording HERE](#)

Reviewing VA's Implementation of the PACT Act

May 16th @ 10:30am

[Watch recording HERE](#)

**Senate Veterans Affairs Committee**

Review of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and 2025 Advance Appropriations Requests for the Department of Veterans Affairs

May 17th @ 3pm

[More information HERE](#)

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee**

Markup of Fiscal Year 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Bill

May 17th @ 10am

[Watch recording HERE](#)



Starting July 16th, 988 will be a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the U.S., you can easily access 24/7 emotional support.

In the meantime, please continue to share 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to be connected with a trained, caring counselor.

We're here for you.

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