

July 30, 2024

The Honorable Greg Murphy
United States House of Representatives
407 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Deborah Ross
United States House of Representatives
1221 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Hudson
United States House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Murphy, Representative Ross and Representative Hudson,

On behalf of the undersigned, which represent the interests and concerns of well over one million members of the Uniformed Services, Veterans, their family members, retirees and survivors, we are pleased to offer our support for H.R. 8545, the *Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2024*, to make technical corrections to the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022.

Addressing toxic exposure has long been a top priority of our organizations, and we proudly advocated for the Camp Lejeune Justice Act (CLJA) as part of the PACT Act in the 117th Congress. The CLJA was intended to provide a fair and timely path for judicial relief for the Servicemembers, Veterans and family members who were exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune between 1953 and 1987.

However, since the PACT Act was signed into law in August 22, a number of issues have been raised due to the fact the Department of Justice (DOJ) has settled just 53 claims, no cases have gone to trial, and the affected Veterans and family members continue to wait for justice.

Most concerning, those affected by the water have been stripped of their right to a jury trial. Despite Congress' intent for victims to have a right to trial by jury and the Camp Lejeune Justice Act stating explicitly, "Nothing in this subsection shall impair the right of any party to a trial by jury," the courts have ruled that the language in CLJA is sufficiently ambiguous and upheld the DOJ's motion to strike this right. The legislation would restore this critical right by adopting language the court laid out as adequate to support a right to trial by jury.

The bill also addresses the current backlog of cases. The original CLJA focused their cases in one venue, the Eastern District of NC to ensure consistency in decision-making, but the resulting case load has threatened the ability of the victims to obtain timely resolutions of their cases. The legislation adds an additional eight district courts as trial venues to address this threat. All these courts are subject to the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to maintain consistent decisions.

Additionally, the bill sets attorneys' fees, which were not addressed in the original legislation, at 20% for cases settled before trial and 25% for cases that go to trial. This will ensure access to qualified counsel as well as adequate recovery by victims.

It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we support H.R 8545, the *Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2024*, which will finally allow Servicemembers, Veterans and their families exposed to contaminated at Camp Lejeune to get the judicial relief they are due.

On behalf of our membership, we thank you all for your service and advocacy for our nation's Servicemembers and Veterans and look forward to working with you and your staff to advance H.R. 8545. Many of those affected are critically ill, and we urge you to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

[Marine Corps League](#)

[Marine Corps Reserve Association](#)

[Special Operations Association of America](#)

[Vietnam Veterans of America](#)

[Moral Compass Federation](#)

[Fleet Reserve Association](#)

[Enlisted Association of the National Guard](#)

[Non-Commissioned Officers Association](#)