

Responding to “What has the Biden-Harris Administration done for Veterans?”

You may hear Republicans say that the Trump administration improved Veterans services by involving the private sector to address long waits for appointments, but that improvement was only partially successful and not sustainable.

We Democrats must emphasize that ***Biden-Harris went well beyond*** that limited fix: Democrats **expanded and improved the infrastructure and increased capacity within the VA**. Care and benefits are now being provided at record rates, exceeding growth for the last 15 years.

Biden fixed two weaknesses in the VA system.:

- ▶ First, **long waits for appointments**. The VA did not have the resources to meet veterans’ needs on a timely basis. Private services became permitted under some circumstances, but this was a very expensive non-sustainable solution.
- ▶ Second, many veterans were suffering from various ailments caused by their **exposure to toxic fumes** when they served in the Middle East.

Biden-Harris passed the PACT Act, which prioritized helping our Veterans get timely treatment for: respiratory illness, cancer, as well as PTSD and other mental health needs.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, the VA expanded its services for assessment and treatment of these conditions and made them effective the day the Act was signed into law (August 2022). This meant **veterans applications were approved more quickly**. In addition, this **law provides support for caregivers** in Veteran families.

In fiscal year 2023, the **Biden-Harris Administration expanded VA's workforce** so they can now deliver care and benefits to Veterans at record rates, exceeding growth for the last 15 years. This has allowed the VA to

- ▶ **provide more health care services**
- ▶ **provide mental health services**
- ▶ **provide suicide prevention services**
- ▶ **house 40,000 formerly homeless veterans**
- ▶ **process benefits expeditiously**
- ▶ **deliver support for caregivers**
- ▶ **expand maternity and reproductive care**

In **New Mexico**, the VA has granted **6,858 Benefit Claims under the PACT Act**, and **added 892 enrollees to VA** related to PACT Act Authority