



**Benefits Delivery
Protection & Remediation**
Protecting America's Heroes

PACT Act Fraud Prevention and Awareness Campaign

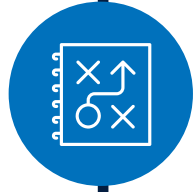
08/10/2022 | Veterans Service Organization (VSO) National Directors Briefing



Discussion Topics



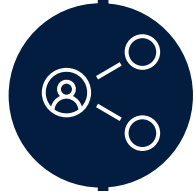
PREDATORY PRACTICES SURROUNDING THE PACT ACT



OVERVIEW OF TACTICS



WHAT VBA IS DOING



TIPS TO SHARE



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Predatory Companies



One of the schemes VA and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) are fighting is related to the Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT Act), which will be the biggest expansion of Veterans benefits in history.

VA was recently notified in regard to predatory law firms targeting Veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune. The law firms are pressuring Veterans to sign contracts allowing the attorneys to represent them in federal lawsuits filed in response to the Camp Lejeune Justice Act.

Predatory Actions Examples

What We Know

- Multiple Veterans contacted by the predatory companies in the last 2-3 weeks
- Veteran contact information likely obtained through the Camp Lejeune registry or other publicly available registries
- At least 14 Marines have been contacted (cold calls, emails, text messages) by different companies.



AGGRESSIVE EMAILS

Companies are acting aggressively – emails outline a sense of urgency, encouraging the Veteran to act immediately over the weekend.



ON THE WEB

Companies are advertising Camp Lejeune lawsuit support with no initial fees unless the suit is won.



FALSE INFORMATION

Companies were advertising services on social media and TV before the PACT Act, and specifically the Camp Lejeune Justice Act was passed. Ads target Veterans and previous civilian employees stationed at Camp Lejeune.



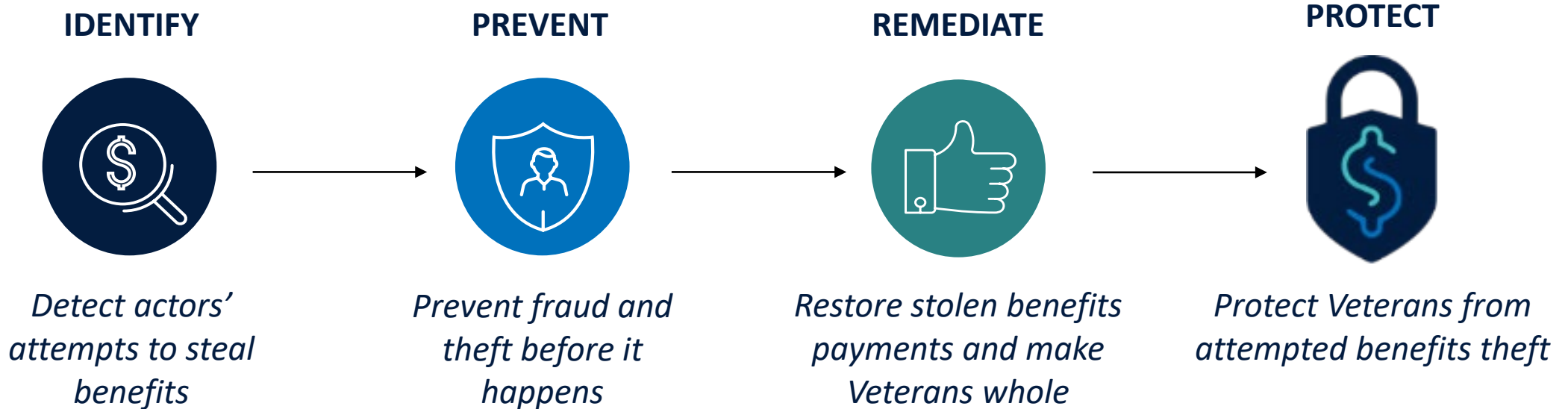
EGREGIOUS CONTRACT

Companies are requesting a % of the total amount recovered from Veterans and requiring Veterans to provide access (PII risk) to their medical records and information. Additionally, the contract is sent through a system that does not allow users to print and copy the document.

How is VBA Combatting Fraud?



VBA uses **standardized processes**, based on industry best practices, to **detect, remediate**, and ultimately **prevent theft** of Veteran's benefits payments. If a case is investigated and determined to be fraud, VBA works to **restore benefits**. VBA also supports the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) and law enforcement agencies in their **investigation and prosecution of bad actors**.



How is VBA Combatting Fraud Related to the PACT Act?

- Continuing to compile information on suspicious companies and others as information comes in from Veterans who contact VBA
- Preparing outreach campaign materials to warn Veterans about these schemes
- Leveraging partnerships within VA to share communications artifacts for dissemination
- Preparing to share insights with OIG in their investigation and prosecution of bad actors



Do's and Don'ts for Veterans



Do be cautious of aggressive law firms or companies expressing a sense of urgency by (frequent text messages, phone calls, and media communications) insisting that you must act now or requiring you to sign legally binding documents before speaking to an attorney.



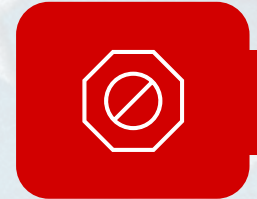
Do apply directly to the VA if you plan to file a claim. Applications can be submitted in person at any regional office or online. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.



Do contact the VA directly at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of a phone call, text, or email you've received.



Do validate credentials of attorneys utilizing Office of General Counsel's (OGC) Accreditation Search tool and work with your VSO if you need help filing a claim.



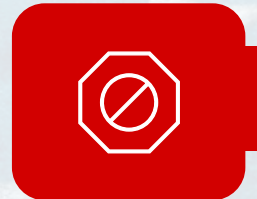
Don't sign legally binding documents giving someone full discretion to act on your behalf.



Don't sign a blank form someone else will fill out later. See the fully completed form before you sign and keep a copy for yourself.



Don't agree to pay an unaccredited law firm or company a percentage of your benefit payment for their assistance. If you need help filing a claim, there are accredited representatives to assist you.



Don't automatically trust for-profit companies using VA's name. They may alter their name to create a false association and establish legitimacy.

What VSOs Can do to Assist?

VSOs are a force multiplier as they can strengthen and reinforce current protection measures, thus making the field of VA's benefits a hostile environment for criminals.

VSOs Value for Veterans

- Playing an essential role in ensuring Veterans and their families have the support and assistance they need after service.
- Are uniquely positioned to advocate for Veterans and their dependents on a national and county level.
- Serving as trusted advisors to Veterans and are familiar with Veteran needs.

VSOs can Assist by:

- Validating credentials of attorneys by utilizing [Office of General Counsel's Accreditation Search tool](#).
- Educating member Veterans and their families about the PACT Act and the types of fraud tactics being used against them.
- Directing Veterans to services to help file their claims. The VA offers free services to assist Veterans with filing claims and managing their benefits. VSOs are our biggest advocate in assisting Veterans to properly apply for benefits.
- Providing Veterans with resources and best practices to protect themselves from fraud.

VBA Works for Veterans

- Actively protecting Veterans and raising fraud prevention awareness with external organization. including VSO partners.
- Designing and executing fraud detection technologies along with risk management strategies.
- Providing FWA investigation assistance to OIG and external Federal and state investigatory agencies.

Resources



- Veterans and survivors who think they might be eligible should apply for PACT Act benefits right now by going to www.va.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411 for more information.
- You can validate credentials of attorneys utilizing OGC's [Accreditation Search tool](#).
- For more information on presumptive VA claims, reference the [Presumptive Disability Benefits fact sheet](#).
- If you need help filing a claim, there are accredited representatives to assist you. If you are unsure about a phone call, email, or text, contact VA directly at 1-800-827-1000.
- If an entity is projecting misinformation or has questionable business practices regarding VA entitlements, file a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#) and the [Better Business Bureau](#).
- To report suspected activity, please contact VA OIG [\(OIG\) Hotline \(va.gov\)](#) or call (800) 488-8244.