

As Senate Confirms Shulkin as VA Secretary, Veterans Ask Administration for Results

NEW YORK, NY (February 13, 2017) – Today, Dr. David J. Shulkin was confirmed as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs with strong bipartisan support, passing the Senate in a unanimous vote of 100 to 0. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the non-partisan, leading voice for the Post-9/11 generation of veterans, welcomes Dr. Shulkin as a capable advocate for America's 22 million veterans, and calls on the Trump Administration to move quickly to fulfill his campaign promises to veterans, noting, "Now, the hard work begins."

"We are happy to see such overwhelming, bipartisan support for Dr. Shulkin. Hopefully, that tone of unity and bipartisanship can continue around veterans' issues for the next few years," **said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA.**

"Our members are pleased to see this nomination has moved fast and without controversy, but now, the hard work for Shulkin and the President begins. Big promises from the campaign must be followed by big outcomes. Dr. Shulkin knows the VA and should not require time to learn. ***We expect and deserve to see results right away.*** After decades of empty promises and failed results, our members are rightfully skeptical now about VA's ability to make the changes we need quickly—especially in such a divisive political environment. We encourage Dr. Shulkin, the President, and everyone at VA to see the hundreds of questions posed to the incoming Secretary from IAVA members nationwide [here](#). IAVA has worked with both sides of the aisle and numerous VA Secretaries over the last decade. We are standing by to be a resource to Dr. Shulkin and are rooting for him to succeed."

"On behalf of our over 400,000 members worldwide, we know there is hard work ahead, but we believe Dr. Shulkin is up to the test and we look forward to working with him as he creates his vision for the VA," continued Rieckhoff.

IAVA will continue to pressure all elected officials, including Dr. Shulkin, to work with leadership from both sides of the aisle to ensure VA is best equipped to care for all generations of veterans, including the 2.8 million Post-9/11 veterans. In addition, IAVA looks to Dr. Shulkin to devote focus on the top four policy priorities outlined in the [IAVA Policy Agenda](#):

Continue path toward a 21st century VA: For years, IAVA has demanded a 21st century VA: an organization able to find problems, respond decisively, and provide high-quality, timely access to care through an integrated network of care with VA at the core of this network. This is especially urgent for IAVA members who present new healthcare needs, more gender diversity, and significant geographic shifts. In the last two years, Congress, the

Administration and the VSO community have truly come together to work towards this goal.

Lead cultural change to fully recognize the service of women veterans: As the fastest growing members of the veteran population, women veterans must receive the acknowledgment and care they deserve through the expansion of programs specifically tailored to support their needs.

Prevent Suicide Among Troops and Veterans: We must commit to combating suicide and improving mental health care for veterans through continued implementation of the SAV Act and commitment to actions such as recruiting MH professionals to VA, improvement to mental health care access, continued improvements to the Veterans Crisis Line and expansion of peer support programs. Veteran suicide remains a national crisis, with an estimated 20 veterans dying each day from suicide. The passage of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act of 2015, spearheaded by IAVA, was a landmark, bipartisan effort that showed America its politicians can work together, and that veterans issues are everyone's issues, but there is still much work to be done.

Defend the New GI Bill: We must also commit to defending the promises made to this nation's veterans by not harvesting established benefits, like the post-9/11 GI Bill, as a piggy-bank to fund other government programs. Further, we must commit to ensuring that those who have dutifully served receive the benefits promised to them, including National Guardsmen and Reservists.

For more information on IAVA's detailed recommendations for the President-elect, his appointees and all elected officials, see our [Policy Agenda](#).

IAVA is the leading voice of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in Washington and communities nationwide. Led by veterans, our non-partisan advocacy work ensures that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families are supported, protected and never forgotten. Since 2004, IAVA has been a juggernaut in Washington, creating and driving the national conversation on issues ranging from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to women veteran issues to veteran unemployment. IAVA's dedicated staff in Washington, D.C. leads this work, advocating on behalf of our members daily. We also train our member veterans to be powerful advocates for their local community.

IAVA is focused on results and has delivered historic impacts. Every year since 2007, in an increasingly gridlocked political environment and with an extremely limited operating budget, IAVA has passed at least one major piece of groundbreaking legislation for our community ranging from the Post-9/11 GI Bill (2008), to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act (2011), to The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act (2015).

See [IAVA's Advocacy Program Digital Hub](#) for the full list of victories and to learn more about how you can help.