

Department of Defense Report Shows National Guard and Reservist Suicides Increased

New York, NY (July 22, 2014) – On the day of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary nominee Robert A. McDonald's appearance in a confirmation hearing before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, the Department of Defense (DoD) released its Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) for CY 2013. The report finds that in CY 2013, suicides among active-duty soldiers decreased, while suicides among National Guard members and Reservists increased.

Confirming the alarming trend, IAVA's 2014 Member Survey, which will be released in Boston and [Washington DC](#) on Thursday, will show that a significant number of Iraq and Afghanistan vets know other vets who have died by or attempted suicide. The full survey will be available at [iava.org](#) on Thursday at noon.

IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff released the following statement:

"We were inspired by Robert McDonald's testimony today and we urge the Senate to quickly confirm him so he can get to work," said Rieckhoff. "The suicide numbers released today underscore the work that needs to be done. Any number of suicides is too many. But these numbers are limited only to the Department of Defense and do not show the full scope of suicide in our community—and we caution everyone against assuming it does. Any drop in active duty suicides is offset by the alarming increased numbers in the Reserves and National Guard. We know that most post-9/11 suicides happen after veterans leave the Department of Defense. To get a full picture of the scope of veterans suicides, we must assess the rate for the entire population of veterans who have served since 9/11. We will share our glimpse into that population when we release the results of our annual IAVA membership survey on Thursday in Washington and Boston. We feel strongly that those results are a much better indicator of the true scope and depth of the impact of veterans suicide. We continue to call on Congress to pass the Clay Hunt SAV Act and on the President to take Executive Action to combat this devastating problem impacting our community nationwide as outlined in IAVA's 2014 Campaign to Combat Suicide."

In March, IAVA launched the [We've Got Your Back: IAVA's Campaign to Combat Suicide](#), a historic, yearlong effort to address veteran suicide and improve access to quality mental health care.

All year long IAVA will activate every element of its membership, programs and partners – both on the ground and online. IAVA will incorporate this effort into everything we do from our monthly VetTogethers to our over 500,000-person strong social media community. We will empower our almost 300,000 members and supporters to serve as a ground force for outreach,

support and advocacy. And we will travel the country, turning public attention to the issue of veteran suicide and promoting solutions.

Note to media: Email press@iava.org and call 212-982-9699 for requests to interview IAVA leadership or local members.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (www.IAVA.org) is the nation's first and largest nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and has more than 270,000 Member Veterans and civilian supporters nationwide. Celebrating its tenth year, IAVA recently received the highest rating – four-stars – from Charity Navigator, America's largest charity evaluator.

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