

[Fight for Action on Burn Pit Exposure Achieves Major Milestone with Congressional Hearing](#)

Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) testified before Congress on its campaign to initiate support for injuries from burn pits and other toxic exposures. The testimony comes after IAVA and bipartisan leaders on Capitol Hill [introduced historic legislation](#) to address burn pits (the critical Burn Pits Accountability Act [H.R. 5671](#)) – and builds on a growing movement led by IAVA members nationwide. These toxic exposures could potentially impact millions, have deeply concerned IAVA members, and could be the Agent Orange of our generation.

IAVA Legislative Director Tom Porter, an Afghanistan veteran who was exposed to burn pits during his deployment, delivered the testimony on behalf of IAVA's nearly half a million nationwide members:

“Year after year, we have seen an upward trend in the number of members reporting symptoms associated with burn pit exposure. Eighty percent of IAVA members who responded to our latest survey report being exposed to burn pits during their deployment; over 60% of those exposed report associated symptoms,” **said Tom Porter** . “I am here not only as IAVA Legislative Director, but as a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom who was exposed to a variety of airborne toxins from burn pits and other sources at many locations I was deployed to in Afghanistan and Kuwait between 2010 and 2011. Before I went downrange during that period, I had zero breathing problems and completely healthy lungs. In the first couple of weeks after I arrived in Kabul, where the air is particularly bad, my lungs had a severe reaction and became infected. It was controlled with medication over the next year. However, after re-deploying home, I stopped the medications and symptoms came back and I was diagnosed with asthma as a result of my deployment.” **continued Porter**.

Watch Tom's testimony on Burn Pits online [here](#).

The testimony was part of IAVA's "[Storm The Hill: Summer](#) ." Storm the Hill is a quarterly advocacy campaign and the most powerful non-partisan policy impact program for post-9/11 vets in America. Veterans are selected from all across America in an extremely competitive process. They are diverse in terms of military rank, geography, gender, political party and ethnic background. These dedicated leaders volunteer to leave behind their families, jobs and school, to undertake an intense, once-in-a-lifetime training experience in Washington, DC focused on helping them become powerhouse veteran advocates for the rest of their life. These inspiring leaders are then unleashed on Washington in small teams for a barnstorming week of IAVA-led Congressional testimony, press conferences, panel discussions, meetings with Senators and Representatives, visits to VA, the Pentagon and the White House. Each year,

Storm the Hill also introduces IAVA's annual Policy Agenda and priority legislation.

The Big 6

In 2018, IAVA's focus is on 6 priorities that our members see as most pressing. This "[Big 6](#)" contains the challenges and opportunities that IAVA members care about most-and see as areas where we can uniquely make an impact. IAVA is building on our core four policy priorities from 2017 to elevate and introduce to the nation two long-standing issues that are extremely important to our community. IAVA members are poised to educate the public, design solutions for positive impact, and lead the way to the future. That starts with our 2018 Big Six.

Initiate Support for Injuries from Burn Pits and Other Toxic Exposures

2018 is the year IAVA will [educate Americans about burn pits](#) and airborne toxic exposures and the devastating potential impact they could be having on the health and welfare of millions of Post-9/11 veterans and their families. Year after year, we have seen an upward trend in the number of members reporting symptoms associated with burn pit exposure. **IAVA will sound the alarm for all Americans: burn pits could be the Agent Orange for our generation of veterans.**