

[IAVA Reacts to New Nominee For Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

New York, NY (June 29, 2014) – Tomorrow, President Obama will nominate former Procter and Gamble chief executive and West Point graduate Robert McDonald as Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff released the following statement after the announcement:

“This is definitely a surprising pick. McDonald is not a name that was on anyone’s radar over the last few weeks,” said Rieckhoff. “His branding background may prove helpful, because there are few organizations in America with a worse reputation with its customers than the VA right now. He’s been away from the military for quite a while, and will have to move quickly to show he is committed to and understands the post-9/11 generation of veterans. We look forward to hearing from him soon and working together to support our vets. At the same time, we hope the President will move quickly to implement the seven remaining recommendations that make up IAVA’s Eight Point “Marshall Plan” to restore confidence in the VA.”

Rieckhoff continued, “For many of our returning men and women in uniform, this year will be life-changing as they transition back to civilian life and the war in Afghanistan winds down. In addition to reforming the VA healthcare system, combating veteran suicide and improving access to mental health care are major priorities for our community. As the new VA chief, McDonald has the ability to revitalize a broken system and alter the status quo, however without a contemporary background in our community, he will need to reach to VSOs and other leading advocates for vets. The White House did not reach out to VSOs during their search process and we hope they will now. The VA cannot do it alone. The new Secretary will need the full support of the President, Department of Defense, Congress and the entire federal bureaucracy.”

In early June, IAVA unveiled a “[Marshall Plan](#)” for veterans: eight steps the Obama Administration and Congress can take now to restore confidence in the VA. The first step was to appoint a post-9/11 veteran, or someone very familiar with the veteran community, as the new head of the VA. Among the steps are recommendations from [IAVA’s 2014 Policy Agenda](#). IAVA urges Congress and the President to enact all of the recommendations from the plan.

Note to media: Email press@iava.org or call 212-982-9699 for an interview with IAVA leadership.

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 10th year anniversary, IAVA recently received the highest rating – four-stars – from Charity Navigator, America’s largest charity evaluator.

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