

[IAVA Reacts to Wilkie Confirmation Vote as VA Secretary](#)

NEW YORK, NY (July 23, 2018) – Today, Robert Wilkie was confirmed as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs with a vote of 86-9. This is the first time in history that there has been opposition to a VA nominee on the Senate Floor.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the non-partisan, leading voice for the Post-9/11 generation of veterans, reacted to Mr. Wilkie's confirmation today and called on the Trump Administration to move quickly to focus on the highest priority issues for IAVA Post-9/11 veterans.

"We finally have a Secretary after months of disruption, controversy and leadership changes. Now the hard work for Mr. Wilkie and the President begins. Big promises must be followed by big outcomes. We expect and deserve to see results right away." **said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA.** "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 Mr. Wilkie, President Trump and everyone at VA to see the [hundreds of questions posed](#) to the incoming Secretary from IAVA members nationwide over the last few months. IAVA has worked with both sides of the aisle and numerous VA Secretaries for more than a decade. We are now standing by again to be a resource to Mr. Wilkie and are rooting for him to succeed. And we hope he'll focus on our [Big 6 policy priorities](#) right away." **continued Rieckhoff.**

In 2018, IAVA is focused on 6 priorities that our members see as most pressing. This "[Big 6](#)" contain the challenges and opportunities that IAVA members care about most – areas where we can uniquely make an impact. 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 6 outlined below. Each campaign will drive toward outcomes in 4 key areas: 1) Public Awareness 2) Executive Action 3) Legislative Change 4) Local Support.

IAVA's Big 6 Priorities are:

- 1) Combat suicide among troops and veterans
- 2) Recognize and improve services for women veterans
- 3) Defend veteran and military education benefits
- 4) Defend and reform government support for today's veterans
- 5) Support injuries from burn pits and other toxic exposures
- 6) Empower veterans who want to utilize cannabis