

Overlooked in First Debate, Vets Look to St. Louis for Answers to Lingering Questions

NEW YORK, NY (October 9, 2016) – Today, after no substantive discussion of veteran issues in the first debate between Secretary Clinton and Mr. Trump, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) renews its call for the next Commander in Chief to show America's 22 million veterans that they have their backs. IAVA, the nation's leading voice of the Post-9/11 Generation of Veterans, looks specifically to the moderators, CNN's Anderson Cooper and ABC's Martha Raddatz to press the candidates to outline how their Administration will care for our veterans if elected President.

"Americans are thirsting for a dialogue worthy of a Presidential debate stage tonight, not the tabloids. Our next Commander and Chief has a chance to do just that by speaking directly to the 22 million veterans who vote at a rate significantly higher than other Americans," said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA. "Tonight's debate must continue the urgent conversation around veteran issues started at last month's IAVA Commander-in-Chief Forum. Too many questions were left unanswered, and IAVA will be looking for the candidates to show leadership by tackling our issues head on."

Rieckhoff continued, "This Friday marked the fifteenth anniversary of the beginning of the War in Afghanistan. Our brothers and sisters are still fighting abroad, but it's an everyday fight to keep their sacrifice a topic of national conversation and those who fought before them from feeling left behind. We look to the hosts to ensure veterans are among the everyday Americans getting to ask questions tonight, and to the moderators to push the candidates for answers our community deserves."

IAVA encourages the moderators and audience members to press for answers to vital questions posed by IAVA members including:

- How would you stop the outrageous rate of 20 veteran suicides in America every day?
- Would you privatize the VA or not? Specifically, how would you improve services for veterans at the VA?
- Do you support the pending Senate plan to cut the Post-9/11 GI Bill by approximately \$3B included in the "Veterans First" act?
- Will you stand with veterans and oppose all cuts to the New GI Bill?
- Would you keep or replace VA Secretary Bob McDonald, and why?
- How specifically would you provide better care to our women veterans?
- Why did you choose to not serve in the military?

There are over 22 million veterans in America. According to IAVA's most recent [Member Survey](#), over 93% of IAVA members intend to vote this November.

IAVA encourages veteran members and supporters nationally to use the hashtag #IAVAVotes before, during and after the debate to focus social media attention on vets issues. ☐☐To stay up-to-date on both candidates' veterans policy positions, and to see IAVA's comprehensive [Policy Agenda](#) recommendations for all candidates, visit IAVA.org/iavavotes.

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 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](#) the full list of victories and to learn more about how you can help.