

# Landmark Veterans Cannabis Legislation Applauded by IAVA

WASHINGTON, DC (April 17, 2018) – In advance of today’s House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) hearing on health legislation for our nation’s veterans and in time for 4/20 on Friday, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the leading empowerment organization for post-9/11 veterans, announced support for the bipartisan *VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2018*, sponsored by HVAC Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-MN) and Chairman Phil Roe (R-TN).

The *VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act* is landmark legislation that clarifies that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the authority to study the efficacy and safety of cannabis use on the health outcomes of veterans and requires VA to report to Congress on how it exercises that authority. **If enacted into law, it would be the first federal law passed focused on veteran cannabis access.**

“The time for change on cannabis for veterans has come. IAVA veterans have demanded that we will be heard this year on the important and emerging health issue of utilizing cannabis to treat injuries of war,” **said IAVA Founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff.** “Veterans consistently and passionately have communicated that cannabis offers effective help in tackling some of the most pressing injuries we face when returning from war. IAVA applauds Reps. Roe and Walz for taking the lead with this major bipartisan step toward addressing critical health needs of veterans. We urge every Member of Congress to stand with veterans, sign on to this bill and expeditiously pass it into law this year. #CannabisForVeterans is a movement that is gaining momentum by the day and we encourage all Americans to join us.”

In IAVA’s latest Member Survey, only 15% opposed legalization for medical use. The youngest of the Post-9/11 generation are most supportive, with about three-fourths of IAVA members under 35 supporting the allowance of medical marijuana. Although acceptance of medical cannabis use is rapidly growing, our national policies are lagging, research is lacking, and stigma persists. In 2018, IAVA members have set out to change that and launched a national conversation underscoring the need for bipartisan, data-based, common-sense solutions that can bring relief to millions, save taxpayers billions and create thousands of jobs for veterans nationwide. Those solutions must include the approval of medical cannabis for every veteran in America who needs it.

Earlier this year, IAVA was successful in working with partners to pass into law legislation to prohibit the Department of Justice from preventing implementation of state cannabis laws, including for medical purposes. The effort was in concert with IAVA’s launch of its landmark [“Big 6” initiative](#), our biggest and boldest advocacy campaign ever, centering veterans voices and empowering them to lead the nation forward on our top priorities. The Big 6

is an urgent call to Congress, the White House, and all Americans to stand with IAVA now to tackle veteran suicide, support women veterans, defend the GI Bill, invest in and protect VA and DoD reform, sound the alarm on burn pits and empower veterans to utilize medical cannabis.

Click [here](#) to see IAVA's full Policy Agenda.