

[IAVA Calls for Second GOP Debate to Include Vet-focused Policies](#)

IAVA to hold candidates responsible for veterans policies via new Presidential Tracker

LOS ANGELES (September 16, 2015) – Tonight, as the 2016 Presidential race continues with the second Republican National Committee (GOP) sponsored debate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the nation's first and largest nonpartisan organization for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, calls on candidates to outline concrete campaign agendas to address the most urgent issues impacting America's Post-9/11 veterans and their families. IAVA also calls on CNN and moderator Jake Tapper to present questions on veterans policies. Finally, IAVA encourages veteran members and supporters to use the hashtag #IAVAVotes throughout the debate to focus social media attention on vets issues.

While IAVA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that does not endorse political candidates of any party, in conjunction with tonight's debate, IAVA launched a new Presidential Tracker at IAVA.org/iavavotes as an up-to-date resource for voters to review each Democratic and Republican candidate's position, or lack thereof, on veterans issues.

"If a candidate is serious about becoming our Commander in Chief, he or she must be committed to supporting veterans. Platitudes are not enough," said Paul Rieckhoff, IAVA Founder and CEO. "Our nation's 22 million veterans deserve clear, specific plans to address our most pressing issues. It easy to say 'I'll clean up the VA!,' but we want to see specifics about how each candidate plans to do it. And IAVA's Presidential Tracker will help educate our members and the general public on which candidates have prioritized veterans and their families and hold candidates accountable. In the first GOP debate, veterans were mentioned only two times and discussed for a total of 20 seconds. After over a decade of war, we deserve more than a throw-away 20 seconds. Of the 11 candidates participating in tonight's debate, only four have issued a policy platform on their official presidential website that addresses veterans. IAVA is disappointed by the lack of attention given to the critical issues facing the more than 2.8 million Iraq and Afghanistan service members."

"CNN and Jake Tapper have a strong track record of covering veterans issues," Rieckhoff continued. "Tonight is a perfect opportunity for them to ask questions like:

- How would you stop the outrageous rate of veteran suicide in America?
- How would you have reacted to the VA scandal that emerged in Phoenix last year?
- Would you privatize the VA?

- Would you keep or replace VA Secretary Bob McDonald?
- How specifically would you provide better care to our women veterans?
- Why did you never serve in the military?
- What is your reaction to the historic recent news of two women graduating from Army Ranger school for the first time?"

IAVA urges candidates from both parties to address the vital issues facing returning soldiers, including mental health/PTSD care, transforming the VA into a 21st Century organization, protecting the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and improving women's health care at VA facilities. IAVA encourages candidates toward a lively debate around these and other pressing issues as well as laying out complete policy agendas to address and support members of the military and their families. The second round debate will take place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California at 8pm ET / 5pm PT.

For complete policy recommendations, read IAVA's Policy Agenda [here](#). An updated version of the Policy Agenda is scheduled to be released in the coming weeks to serve as a blueprint for candidates and elected leaders from both political parties to help improve the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families.