

Post-9/11 Veterans Claim Victory with Mayor de Blasio Bill Signing

IAVA leads the effort to create historic city Department of Veteran Services



NEW YORK (December 10, 2015) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the leading post-9/11 veteran empowerment organization and the only major veteran service organization headquartered in New York City, today celebrates the long-sought victory to establish a city Department of Veteran Services. The group will join other local veterans at a ceremony on the USS Intrepid, where Mayor de Blasio will sign legislation into law establishing the permanent department.

“The mayor’s signature on this bill is a turning point for veterans in New York City,” said Paul Rieckhoff, IAVA Founder and CEO. “Today will be remembered as a moment that changed not just this city, but the entire nation. Gaining Mayor de Blasio’s support for this bill was welcomed by the city’s 230,000 veterans and their families, and we are pleased to stand here today aboard the iconic USS Intrepid ready to turn over a new leaf with the mayor. The veterans community is grateful for the leadership of individuals like Council Member Eric Ulrich, Chair of the Veterans’ Committee, and Public Advocate Letitia James who fought to get this bill introduced, supported and unanimously passed by the council.”

In October 2014, IAVA provided Mayor de Blasio and New York City Commissioner of Veterans’ Affairs Loree Sutton with a set of policy [recommendations](#) as a means to develop a comprehensive policy plan for New York City veterans. Those recommendations included the creation of a new Department of Veterans Affairs, which would provide substantial resources and options for veterans seeking help on a range of issues, including housing, healthcare and employment.

IAVA will use today’s bill signing to call for the department to be

appropriately funded annually at \$100 million to support the city's 230,000 veterans and their families. "The veterans community fought long and hard for a permanent department that would forever be a resource for veterans in need. The last thing we need is a hollow victory where we have a vets office in name only. The NYC Department of Veteran Services must be allocated appropriately robust annual funding to address the needs of our community," added Rieckhoff.

Today's announcement follows the recent release of IAVA's [Policy Agenda](#) – an 11-point comprehensive blueprint for how all levels of government, the private sector, nonprofits and communities can support our nation's veterans. The agenda calls for improvements to the way federal, state and local governments can improve outreach and support of its veteran residents.