

Post-9/11 Veterans React to Trump Budget Proposal

New York, NY (May 23, 2017) – Today, President Trump released the first budget proposal of his Administration. The proposed budget includes a \$4 billion increase in discretionary funding to the VA, including an increase in funds allocated to women veterans, a total of \$186.5 billion.

“After over a decade of war, the needs of the VA have never been higher. We are pleased to see the President recognize and prioritize this reality. And we are encouraged to see a commitment to mental health, homelessness and other issues our members have prioritized, put forth in our latest [Policy Agenda](#). The size of the budget is important, but so is how it’s spent,” **said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO at IAVA** . “IAVA will look to VA Secretary Shulkin to continue to focus on accountability when it comes to spending. IAVA is also concerned about the massive investment in VA’s still unproven “Choice” program. IAVA members have given “Choice” very mixed reviews in our annual survey. The budget calls for a \$28 billion increase to the VA Choice program over the next decade –15% of the funding overall. Yet only 20% of IAVA members have actually used the program. Of those, only 37% rated the Choice program as above average/excellent, while 34% rated it as average and a concerning 28% rated it as below average/poor.

“IAVA has also continued to call for a focus on women veterans and the passage of the Deborah Sampson Act, as part of our historic [She Who Borne The Battle](#) campaign. The proposed 7% increase in funding for gender-specific health care is step in the right direction. But it’s not enough. With over 2 million women veterans in America, \$505 million is a ridiculously small commitment. Women are the fastest growing part of the veteran population, but not the fastest growing part of the President’s budget. We hope Congress will remedy this disparity—and ensure our women veterans are not left behind in the critical year ahead.”

For a full list of IAVA priorities see our full [Policy Agenda](#).