

Stabenow Becomes 20th Senator on Historic Women Veterans' Bill

NEW YORK, NY (June 16, 2017) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the leading Post-9/11 veterans empowerment organization, is proud to announce that Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI) has become the 20th Senator to co-sponsor the [Deborah Sampson Act](#) to fully recognize and support women veterans.

In addition to changing the VA's non-inclusive motto, the Deborah Sampson Act aims to fill critical gaps in VA care for women vets, including funding peer-to-peer assistance and improve legal and support services, data tracking and reporting and newborn medical care.

"IAVA's over 425,000 IAVA members nationwide and especially those in Michigan want to thank Senator Stabenow for stepping up to support women veterans at this critical time. Her leadership on the Deborah Sampson Act will add a tremendous boost to our efforts. IAVA's most recent member survey, only 27 percent of women veteran respondents felt that the American public respects their service," **said Paul Rieckhoff, CEO and Founder of IAVA.** "After 15 years at war with women on the front lines, we can no longer tolerate a VA that does not adequately support women veterans, both in its services and in the system's culture. That's why IAVA joined bipartisan members of Congress to introduce the Deborah Sampson Act. Together we will forever change the landscape in America to better recognize and support women veterans."

Senator Stabenow joins Senators Jon Tester (MT), John Boozman (AR), Tim Kaine (VA), Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), Patty Murphy (WA), Tammy Baldwin (WI), Bill Nelson (FL), Margaret Hassan (NH), Brian Schatz (HI), Sherrod Bown (OH), Jeanne Shaheen (NH), Dianne Feinstein (CA), Chris Van Hollen (MD), Jack Reed (RI), Al Franken (MN), Cory Booker (NJ), Kamala Harris (CA) and Sheldon Whitehouse (RI).

The Deborah Sampson Act does the following:

- Changes the dated and exclusionary VA motto that currently reads, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan."
- Empowers women veterans by expanding peer-to-peer counseling, group counseling and call centers for women veterans,
- Improves the quality of care for infant children of women veterans by increasing the number of days of maternity care VA facilities can provide and authorizing medically-necessary transportation for newborns,
- Eliminates barriers to care by increasing the number of gender-specific providers and coordinators in VA facilities, training clinicians, and retrofitting VA facilities to enhance privacy and improve the environment of care for women veterans,
- Provides support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance

and authorizes additional grants for organizations supporting low-income women veterans,

- Improves the collection and analysis of data regarding women and minority veterans, and expands outreach by centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily accessible place on the VA website.

She Who Borne The Battle: More than 345,000 women have deployed since 9/11. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population and that trend will continue as the number of male veterans simultaneously declines over the next decades. However, many female veterans are left without the proper care to support their needs when they return from their service. She Who Borne the Battle will change this by providing a foundation of public awareness, local support and policy changes solely targeted at supporting and empowering female veterans. Learn more at SheWhoBorneTheBattle.org.

The Deborah Sampson Act: Created in consultation with IAVA staff and driven by quantitative and qualitative data from IAVA's [annual member survey](#), the Deborah Sampson Act will: Change the VA motto; strengthen data and transparency; recognize and support the value of peer support; require coordinated community care and; increase outreach.

A [fact sheet](#) on The Deborah Sampson Act can be found here and full text of the bill can be found online [HERE](#).