

# [VA OIG Report Shows Backlog Progress Numbers Over-stated](#)

**New York, NY (July 14, 2014)** – According to USA Today, new information to be released by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) finds that the VA struggles to properly pay veterans their disability benefits. Furthermore, investigators at a Philadelphia VA benefits office are examining allegations that staff shredded or hid mail related to claims or failed to respond to 32,000 requests. In Baltimore, a VA claims processor was discovered storing 8,000 pieces of unprocessed claims-related mail, Social Security data and other documents in his office, in addition to 80 other pending claims.

Tonight, the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) will hold a hearing on evaluating the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) process in achieving its goals at 7:30 p.m. at 334 Cannon House Office Building. You can watch the hearing on [C-SPAN 2](#) and the [HVAC website](#).

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff released the following statement:

“Once again veterans learn they cannot trust the VA’s numbers,” said Rieckhoff. “As more terrible news breaks out of Philadelphia and Baltimore, its clear the VA scandal is far from over. With just weeks left before the summer break, IAVA encourages Congress and the President to pass the Sanders-McCain VA Management Accountability Act and the Clay Hunt SAV Act. Our veterans cannot afford, nor do they deserve, to wait months on end for their disability benefits. A number of our veterans are facing financial strain, and delayed exams and ratings only exacerbate their stress. For over a year and a half, IAVA has been fighting to end the VA backlog, and will continue to do so until we reach backlog zero. Despite this bad news, the President has failed to meet with IAVA and other VSO leaders to discuss the path forward for the VA and other pressing issues including suicide.”

This afternoon the VA reported that 267,000 veterans are waiting at least 125 days in the disability claims backlog. Also, there are 280,502 veterans waiting for their appeals to be processed.

Since IAVA started a campaign to end the VA backlog last year, the VA has reduced the overall backlog by 57.8%. Last summer, IAVA launched [The Wait We Carry](#), a data visualization tool that highlighted the delay veterans faced in receiving their benefits. IAVA members continue to voice concerns about the quality of claims processing and rise of appeals.

Last Thursday, IAVA stood with HVAC Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL), Rep. Tim Walz (D-MN) and Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) as Miller introduced the [Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention For American Veterans Act \(Clay Hunt SAV Act\)](#). The legislation widens access to quality mental health care and combats veteran

suicide.

The [Campaign to Combat Suicide](#) was designed to raise public awareness of the suicide crisis, demand Congressional action and a Presidential Executive Order to start to reverse the suicide trend.

All year long IAVA will activate every element of its membership, programs and partners – both on the ground and online. IAVA will incorporate this effort into everything we do from our monthly VetTogethers to our over 500,000-person strong social media community. We will empower our almost 300,000 members and supporters to serve as a ground force for outreach, support and advocacy. And we will travel the country, turning public attention to the issue of veteran suicide and promoting solutions.