

[Clinton, Sanders Join Campaign to #DefendTheGIBill](#)

Ahead of New York Primary, leading post-9/11 veterans group calls on presidential candidates to follow suit

NEW YORK (April 18, 2016) – Sec. [Hillary Clinton](#) and Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) (D-Vt.) this weekend pledged to oppose proposed congressional cuts to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) called on the remaining candidates, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Ohio Gov. John Kasich and Mr. Donald Trump, to make the same pledge. IAVA also echoed its call for the White House and the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to oppose this unprecedented attempt to cut the landmark education program used by more than one million veterans and family members.

"We extend our appreciation to Sec. Clinton and Sen. Sanders for recognizing that the Post-9/11 GI Bill must be protected from members of Congress who would use this earned benefit as their piggy bank," said CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff. "We also call on the remaining three presidential candidates to make public statements denouncing these proposed cuts to the GI Bill – arguably the most successful government program in recent history. Additionally, we have yet to hear from President Obama on this vital topic. As a Senator who stood with us when the Post-9/11 GI Bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, we look forward to his leadership in thwarting this dangerous precedent that Congress is maneuvering to set. Even worse, Sens. Isakson (R-Ga.) and Blumenthal (D-Conn.), who are trusted with overseeing the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, continue to sit on the sidelines while Americans at war worry about whether their elected officials will honor their promises. This is not just a veterans issue; it is an issue that will impact military recruiting and ultimately national security for years to come."

Highlights of IAVA's campaign to #DefendTheGIBill:

- IAVA members sent nearly 14,000 emails to Congress;
- Seven IAVA members had high-level meetings with Senate district office staff;
- □ IAVA members and nine members of Congress held a press conference on Capitol Hill;
- Sec. Clinton named IAVA in her a tweet of support; Sen. Sanders also tweeted the need to #DefendTheGIBill;
- Military.com, Military Times, CBS, Politico, Inside Higher Ed, Stars and Stripes, and CNN reported on the campaign; and,
- □ The campaign is supported by Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Air Force Sergeants Association, Association of the United States Navy, and Commissioned Officers Association.

IAVA [led the passage](#) of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008 and in championing upgrades in 2010 and 2014. These upgrades simplified and improved tuition benefits, expanded eligibility to the National Guard, included vocational programs and made nationwide in-state tuition rates a possibility for new veterans beginning this year.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has been used by nearly one million veterans and their family members to accomplish educational goals and chart new career paths.