

# [IAVA-Backed VA Reform and Caregiver Support Signed Into Law Today](#)

**Washington, DC (June 6, 2018)** – Today’s Presidential signing of the VA MISSION Act included a number of IAVA priorities. The new law, in development over the last couple of years, seeks to consolidate, reform, and streamline the many VA community care programs and strengthens healthcare options for veterans, while sunseting the controversial and often unsuccessful “Choice” program over the next 12 months as the reforms are implemented. It also expands the VA Caregiver program to include pre-9/11 veterans and begins a process to evaluate VA infrastructure nationwide to determine how to shape it to fit the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s veterans.

“Today, a number of IAVA priorities were addressed. As with any legislation impacting government, the hard work will come after the signing. Implementation, regular updates and transparency from VA, Congress and the White House will be key to making these promises a reality for veterans nationwide. While far from perfect, this bill does have many elements with the potential to help many veterans.” **said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA.**

Most important for IAVA’s post-9/11 veterans, the MISSION Act includes an important provision to expand veterans’ access to peer support services within the VA, including to attempt to ensure that the needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed, and that female peer specialists are made available to female veterans who are treated at each VA location. This is reflective of a key provision in the [Deborah Sampson Act](#), the centerpiece of the IAVA-led [#SheWhoBorneTheBattle](#) campaign to recognize and improve services for women veterans.

Today’s newly signed legislation directly supports two of IAVA’s “[Big 6](#)” policy focal points for 2018 – supporting women veterans and reforming VA – all of which are being emphasized this week by IAVA veterans from across America during “[Storm the Hill: Summer](#)” in Washington- IAVA’s quarterly advocacy and leadership development program. IAVA will be closely watching the implementation of the new law and working with other VSOs and interested parties to ensure its success.

IAVA was extremely disappointed that our bi-partisan and diverse members were not invited to participate in today’s ceremony. We are also extremely disappointed that IAVA member representatives have not been invited by the White House once since President Trump was elected. It’s now become an outrageously disrespectful pattern to our hundreds of thousands of combat veterans nationwide. The Secretary of Defense, VA Secretary, Congress and thought leaders from across America regularly looked to IAVA for our perspective and counsel since we were founded in 2004. And IAVA will testify tomorrow before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on the important issue of [#BurnPits](#) – as we do regularly before HVAC and SVAC. To exclude IAVA

from a connection with the President is a loss for the President, the national dialogue and all Americans.

Storm The Hill's powerful week of impact is focused on our "[Big 6 Advocacy Priorities for 2018](#)" and continues tonight with [IAVA Salutes](#) highlighting the work of Representative Brian Mast and journalist Leo Shane III, tomorrow with our testimony regarding [burn pits](#) before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health and throughout the week.