

[IAVA CEO Jeremy Butler to Speak on VA MISSION Act at Town Hall featuring Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, National Nurses Union, Other VSOs](#)

New York, NY (April 17, 2019) – Today Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) CEO Jeremy Butler will participate in a Town Hall discussion featuring multiple veteran organizations, National Nurses United and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez aimed at ensuring that the Department of Veterans Affairs implementation of the VA MISSION Act is transparent and in the best interest of the veterans that it is intended to serve.

Hosted by National Nurses United, IAVA will participate in this Town Hall to discuss the current state of the MISSION Act, the status of its implementation, gaps in service, the role of private sector care in treating veteran medical needs and ensuring that the VA meets its obligation to provide quality care. Topics of concern that will be addressed include:

- **Full Funding and Full Staffing of the VA:** With [49,000 vacancies at the VA](#) and the recent rollout of new community care standards, IAVA is focused on ensuring that the VA prioritizes hiring of qualified Veteran Health Administration medical personnel and the reduction of in-VA wait times.
- **Ensuring Private Sector Care Meets High Standards:** Starting in June, veterans will have [increased ability to access private sector care](#), depending on distance from VA facilities and appointment wait times. However, the ability of the VA to assess and monitor the quality of private sector care received is still a work in progress that will not be completed prior to the implementation of the new private sector care access standards.
- **Stopping Privatization:** The use of private sector care in meeting veteran health needs, when done in conjunction with a VA primary care physician, can sometimes be the best course of action. However, there is a concerted effort among some to privatize the VA for political reasons. This is unacceptable and is against the principle of ensuring the best possible care for the veteran community. IAVA will closely monitor the implementation of the VA MISSION Act to ensure that, as the community care program goes into effect, it is not used as vehicle to force veteran care in to the private sector.

IAVA conducts an annual poll of its membership to gauge the views of the Post-9/11 generation of veterans. The results of our [survey](#) are the nation's best tool for understanding this cohort and their needs. 81% of our veterans

say they use the VA for care, and 81% of them rate the care they receive at the VA as average or above average. These consistent high ratings are due to the hard work of nurses and other medical practitioners at the VA who are devoted to serving veterans. While significant work remains to be done to ensure every veteran experiences high quality care, gutting the VA will not improve our veterans' healthcare.

Also speaking at the event will be Kristen Rouse of the NYC Veterans Alliance, John Rowan of Vietnam Veterans of America, Johnnie Williams of Help is on the Way, and Skip Delano of Save our VA and Veterans for Peace. The Town Hall will take place from 6pm-8:30pm at P.S. 83 at 950 Rhineland Avenue in the Bronx.