

# [IAVA Participates in Private Meeting with Secretary Shinseki](#)

**Washington DC (May 29, 2014)** – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Chief of Staff Derek Bennett just emerged from a closed-door meeting with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki, top VA officials and other veteran service organizations. IAVA released the following statement:

“IAVA members are outraged as the VA scandal grows – and today’s meeting did nothing to restore confidence in the Secretary and White House to fix the systematic problems at the Department. Secretary Shinseki today told us that the VA will announce new steps to hold VA employees accountable and that he would accept the recommendations of the Inspector General’s interim report. We do not doubt the Secretary’s sincerity in wanting to fix the problem, but we still have serious questions about whether the Secretary has the tools, resources, and the confidence of VA staff and veterans to create real reform,” said Derek Bennett, IAVA’s Chief of Staff.

IAVA’s [2014 Policy Agenda](#) provides a road map for supporting veterans and getting them the care they earned.

And as the VA scandal grows, IAVA continues to address the top issue for its members: combating veteran suicide. An estimated 22 veterans die by suicide every day. IAVA is urging Senators to cosponsor the historic and comprehensive Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act, S. 2182, which would significantly strengthen efforts to combat suicide. The bill is sponsored by Senator John Walsh of Montana, the only post-9/11 combat veteran in the U.S. Senate.