

[IAVA Releases 2019 Annual Member Survey, Revealing Diverse Opinions among Post 9-11 Veterans](#)

Washington, DC (January 30, 2019) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the leading post-9/11 veterans empowerment organization, unveils its [2019 Annual Member Survey](#), the most comprehensive, all-inclusive look at views of the post-9/11 veteran generation.

After a year of unprecedented politicization of veterans and military by political leaders and controversy inside the VA, the IAVA 2019 Member Survey focuses the nation's attention on what veterans really think, feel, and experience; centering veterans voices and empowering them to lead the nation forward. This year's survey covers topics ranging from the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the NFL Anthem Protests, veteran suicide to mental health, immigration to gun reform policy, cannabis to sexual assault and much more.

"IAVA's in-depth survey is essential to understanding the critical issues affecting veterans. Results from the survey drive what IAVA fights and advocates for everyday – at the front lines in local communities and on Capitol Hill," stated incoming **IAVA Chief Executive Officer [Jeremy Butler](#)**. "Too often, veterans are used as political pawns while priority issues like veteran suicide and toxic exposure from burn pits continue to get overlooked by our country's leaders. This survey clearly explains what IAVA members need to hear from our Commander-in-Chief and all stakeholders, and what we as Americans should demand from our elected officials."

Over 4,600 members responded to this year's Annual Member Survey – IAVA's largest response ever. The survey results accurately and precisely reflect that of IAVA's veteran and military membership nationwide.

"IAVA members continue to speak up and take a stand on the issues that matter most to the post-9/11 generation. The numbers featured in this year's survey are the result of the largest response rate we've seen for an IAVA Member Survey. We can be confident that the numbers represented in this year's survey are accurate and precise and give us an on-the-ground look at IAVA members opinions and realities" said **IAVA Research Director [Stephanie Mullen](#)**.

IAVA uses the data from the Annual Member Survey to inform America about what IAVA members think, feel, and experience, set IAVA's advocacy priorities, and shape a comprehensive policy agenda that is shared online and is distributed to Members of Congress.

This year, IAVA partnered with the digital visionary [Eric Schoenborn and Culture on Demand](#) to create a ground-breaking, interactive digital data visualization, allowing anyone with a computer or smartphone to access and interact with the data.

[The 2019 IAVA Member Survey is available here.](#)

Highlights of the survey include:

On Service and Sacrifice

- The majority of IAVA members (68%) feel that the American public **supports** veterans.
- But 67% feel that the public **does not understand their sacrifices**.
- **Over three-fourths (76%)** would recommend military service to a friend or family member.
- Less than half (47%) of IAVA members feel the war in Iraq was worth it or somewhat worth it and **32% feel our engagement in Iraq was not worth it**.
- However, **62% of IAVA members felt that our engagement in Afghanistan was worth it** or somewhat worth it, with less than 20% saying it was not worth it.

Policies and Politics

- **97% of IAVA Members are registered to vote.**
- **Over half (53%)** of IAVA members **do not feel** that Congress acts in the interest of veterans.
- Independent voters are most prevalent among IAVA Members at 37%, followed by those that identify as Republican (33%) and Democrat (23%), respectively.
- Overwhelmingly (86%), IAVA members agree that having more veterans in Congress will have **a positive impact** on Congress' ability to address national issues.

Mental Health/Suicide Prevention

- Mental health and suicide prevention continued to be the top issue impacting the post-9/11 generation according to IAVA members.
- 43% of respondents indicate that they have had suicidal ideation since joining the military, a **6% rise from 2017**.
- The percent of IAVA members who report knowing a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted or died by suicide remains alarmingly high.
- 65% of respondents personally know a post-9/11 veteran who attempted suicide (54% in 2015).
- 59% of respondents personally know a veteran who died by suicide (45% in 2015).

Burn Pits

- The vast majority of IAVA members have been exposed to burn pits
- 82% reporting exposure to burn pits or toxic exposures
- Of those exposed, 39% believe they have symptoms associated with burn pit exposure and another 45% believe they may have symptoms associated with it.
- Of those exposed to burn pits, 70% are aware of the [VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#).

- 47% of those exposed have submitted their exposure to the registry, **up 12% from last year.**

Firearms

- **68% own a firearm.**
- IAVA members **overwhelming agree with universal background checks (86%),** and the distribution of trigger locks in public spaces like medical centers and sport stores (65%).
- The majority of IAVA members disagree with allowing concealed carry without a permit (59%).
- However, the majority of IAVA members **disagree** with establishing community lockers (57%) and banning assault-style weapons (54%).

NFL Anthem Protests

- 36% of IAVA members agree with the protests, 13% are neutral, and 49% disagree with the protests
- 24% of IAVA members say they will stop watching NFL games because of the protests
- 28% will keep watching and attending NFL games and support the players' right to protest.

Immigration

- 93% agree with military service as a way to expedite U.S. citizenship.
- 81% support the [Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program](#).

Women Veterans

- IAVA members agree that it's important IAVA focus on the issues impacting women veterans (78%).

Post-9/11 GI Bill

- The vast majority of respondents agree that the Post-9/11 GI Bill is important for:
 - Recruitment (78%)
 - Reintegration (87%)
 - Retention (62%)

Cannabis

- IAVA members have long been ahead of the nation in supporting cannabis as a treatment option.
- 90% IAVA members support researching cannabis for medicinal purposes.
- 83% believe in medical cannabis legalization.
- The majority of IAVA members support legalizing recreational cannabis (55%) – up from 44% in 2017.
- 20% of IAVA members report using cannabis for medicinal use.

###

About Survey Methodology: This year's Member Survey was advised by a team at The George Washington University and built on Qualtrics best-in-class survey platform. 4,600 IAVA members took and completed this year's survey – a record number. With a 1% margin of error at the 95% confidence interval, IAVA is confident that the numbers and views reflected in this survey accurately and precisely reflect that of IAVA's veteran and military membership nationwide. The survey was distributed among IAVA's veteran and military members over a month long period from October 19th through November 19th. Almost three-fourths of those that started the survey completed it, a testament to the interest and willingness of our members to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. An incentive to complete the survey (a chance to win Southwest flight vouchers) was provided, a common practice in survey design. For more on our methodology, [see the full survey](#).