

# [IAVA Statement Prior to NYC Veterans Advisory Board Meeting](#)

*Without Mayor de Blasio's engagement, veterans' input falls on deaf ears*

**NEW YORK (April 21, 2015)** – The following statement is from Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff in anticipation of tonight's public meeting of the New York City Mayor's Veteran Advisory Board (VAB):

"Last week, veterans' organizations of all generations from across the city stood united on the steps of City Hall to call on Mayor de Blasio to put forward real plans backed up by real resources to support the city's 200,000-plus veterans. New York's veterans fought for this city. Now, we need its mayor to fight for us. But so far, we've heard nothing from Mayor de Blasio in response to our unified call for his engagement on veterans' issues. Unfortunately, this is not much of a surprise since we've seen little from this mayor during his 16 months in office.

"The mayor has not met with us once since he's been in office, nor has he met with his own advisory board. He's found time to meet with advocates for horse carriage drivers, the Russian band Pussy Riot, and even voters in Iowa. But he hasn't met a single time with his own city's veteran leaders. We call on him to take the first step in correcting this oversight by attending tonight's VAB meeting.

"However, this isn't about meetings. It's about action. And sadly, there's been none of that either. The mayor promised us a plan for veterans in 90 days. That was in November. Veterans Commissioner Loree Sutton was appointed to great fanfare last fall, but without resources, she's nothing more than symbolic figure. She can't do it alone. And the VAB can't do it alone. Without the active input of the mayor, the advice of the the VAB and the broader veterans community will fall on deaf ears.

"Our message to Mayor de Blasio is simple: Lead the way. Show us you care. Show us that New York City wants veterans here. Mr. Mayor, the ball's in your court."

The first Veterans' Advisory Board meeting of the year will be held tonight at 7:00 pm. IAVA members and representatives from the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs and the New York

City Council Committee on Veterans will be in attendance:

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5th Floor  
Tuesday, April 21  
6:30 pm doors, 7:00 pm meeting

IAVA members wishing to attend should visit:

[https://my.iava.org/cov\\_event?id=a5PC0000000CbrRMAS](https://my.iava.org/cov_event?id=a5PC0000000CbrRMAS)