

[Reps Bacon and Yarmuth Join Historic Women Veterans Bill](#)

NEW YORK, NY (February 28, 2018) – Today, as Chief Policy Officer Melissa Bryant attends the monthly Military Coalition (TMC) meeting in Washington D.C., Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) applauds Representatives Don Bacon (R-NE) and John Yarmuth (D-KY) for co-sponsoring the [Deborah Sampson Act](#) (H.R. 2452) to fully recognize and support women veterans. They join a growing list of 80 bipartisan members of Congress who have stood up to sign on to the bill.

In addition to asking for a sensing of Congress to change [VA's non-inclusive motto](#), the Deborah Sampson Act aims to fill critical gaps in VA care for women vets, including funding peer-to-peer assistance and improve legal and support services, data tracking and reporting and newborn medical care.

“IAVA’s over 425,000 IAVA members nationwide and especially those in Nebraska and Kentucky want to thank Representatives Bacon and Yarmuth for stepping up to support women veterans at this critical time. Their leadership on the Deborah Sampson Act will add a tremendous boost to our efforts. In IAVA’s most recent member survey, only 27 percent of women veteran respondents felt that the American public respects their service,” **said Paul Rieckhoff, CEO and Founder of IAVA.** “After 16 years at war with women on the front lines, we can no longer tolerate a VA that does not adequately support women veterans. That’s why IAVA joined bipartisan members of Congress to introduce the Deborah Sampson Act. Together we will forever change the landscape in America to better recognize and support women veterans.”

Since the bill’s introduction, [18 Veterans Service Organizations have signed on as partners](#), and thousands of veterans and supporters have engaged their Members of Congress to encourage their support.

The Deborah Sampson Act does the following:

- Asks for a sensing of Congress to change the dated and exclusionary VA motto that currently reads, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan.”
- Empowers women veterans by expanding peer-to-peer counseling, group counseling and call centers for women veterans,
- Improves the quality of care for infant children of women veterans by increasing the number of days of maternity care VA facilities can provide and authorizing medically-necessary transportation for newborns,
- Eliminates barriers to care by increasing the number of gender-specific providers and coordinators in VA facilities, training clinicians, and retrofitting VA facilities to enhance privacy and improve the environment of care for women veterans,
- Provides support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance and authorizes additional grants for organizations supporting low-income

women veterans,

- Improves the collection and analysis of data regarding women and minority veterans, and expands outreach by centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily accessible place on the VA website.

She Who Borne The Battle: More than 345,000 women have deployed since 9/11. They make up 13% of IAVA's membership. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population and that trend will continue as the number of male veterans simultaneously declines over the next decades. However, many female veterans are left without the proper care to support their needs when they return from their service. She Who Borne the Battle will change this by providing a foundation of public awareness, local support and policy changes solely targeted at supporting and empowering female veterans. Learn more at SheWhoBorneTheBattle.org.

The Deborah Sampson Act: Created in consultation with IAVA staff and driven by quantitative and qualitative data from [IAVA's annual member survey](#), the Deborah Sampson Act will: Change the VA motto; strengthen data and transparency; recognize and support the value of peer support; require coordinated community care and; increase outreach. A full list of the 80 bipartisan House and Senate co-sponsors is listed on our website and updated daily. We encourage all media, veterans and voters to see if their representatives are on the list.

Eighteen powerful organizations have joined IAVA in support of the Deborah Sampson Act: Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, Disabled Veterans of America (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), American Veterans (AMVETS), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), National Military Families Association (NMFA), Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA), U.S. Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA), Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA), Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

A fact sheet on The Deborah Sampson Act can be found [here](#) and full text of the bill can be found online [HERE](#).