

Veterans Kick Off “Storm the Hill” to Ensure Congress Acts on IAVA 2019 Policy Priorities

Washington, DC (March 4, 2019) – Members of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) descended on Washington, DC today for day one of the organization’s quarterly [Storm the Hill](#). During the week-long Storm the Hill, IAVA mobilizes veterans from across the United States to meet with their Members of Congress and engage in a variety of events championing a wide array of important veterans issues. IAVA will also lead a press conference on Capitol Hill with House and Senate supporters of our priority legislation and partner VSOs March 5th at 11am. IAVA’s policy priorities for the 116th Congress will be announced at an open press event at noon on March 6th on Capitol Hill.

“We are in the midst of a national conversation about the role of government and what American leadership should look like. Our veterans are coming to Washington DC to model the leadership they hope to see in the VA and in Congress. They have powerful voices that deserve to be heard,” said [Jeremy Butler](#), CEO of IAVA. “Our leadership needs to seize this moment and focus on our veterans and their needs.”

A full schedule of STH events is detailed below.

- *Monday, March 4: Training Day for Stormers*
- *Tuesday March 5: Stormers Meet with Members of Congress, Press*
 - 11:00am: **Press Conference*** (Russell 418) to highlight progress on legislation addressing Burn Pits & Airborne Toxic Exposures, VA Reform for Women Veterans, and Mental Health/Suicide Prevention.
- *Wednesday March 6: Stormers Meet with Members of Congress, Press*
 - 12:00pm: **IAVA Policy Agenda Launch Event*** (Rayburn 2060) to announce the release of IAVA’s policy agenda for the 116th Congress. Lunch will be served.
 - 2:00pm: **IAVA Participation in HVAC Roundtable** to speak to the endemic problem of suicide prevention for veterans and the need to increase mental health awareness and treatment options.
- *Thursday March 7: Stormers Meet with Members of Congress, Press*
 - 2:00pm: **IAVA CEO Jeremy Butler Testifies before Joint HVAC/SVAC Hearing** (Dirksen G-50) on legislative priorities of multiple VSOs.
- *Friday March 8: Stormers Depart DC, Some Press Availability*

*Please RSVP to press@iava.org if interested in attending.

As part of the Spring Storm the Hill, IAVA will deliver Congressional testimony and participate in a mental health roundtable with House Veterans Affairs Committee leadership and members. On Thursday March 7th, at a joint hearing by the Senate and House Veterans Affairs committees, IAVA Chief

Executive Officer Jeremy Butler will expound upon IAVA's priorities and expectations for 2019 and the 116th Congress. IAVA's Chief Policy Officer will participate on a March 6 House Veterans Affairs Committee roundtable on Veteran Suicide Prevention and Mental Health – [IAVA's number one policy priority](#).

All week, IAVA veterans will champion IAVA's policy priorities, highlighting the important ways in which veterans continue to be underserved. IAVA's "[Big 6](#)" policy priorities seek to transform the current landscape for veterans by elevating their voices and ensuring veterans, not politicians, drive the agenda. In IAVA's most recent member [survey](#), 68% of IAVA members agree that the American public supports veterans. However, only 19% believe that the public understands their sacrifices. Elevating veterans' voices has never been more important than right now.

Storm the Hill: Storm the Hill is IAVA's signature leadership development program. Over the years, it has grown from a handful of veterans walking the halls of Congress into a nationally-recognized activation – placing Iraq and Afghanistan veterans across the media and in more than 100 meetings with our nation's leaders. Storm the Hill is now a quarterly advocacy campaign and the most powerful non-partisan policy impact program for post-9/11 vets in America. Veterans are selected from all across America in an extremely competitive process. They are diverse in terms of military rank, geography, gender, political party and ethnic background. These dedicated leaders volunteer to leave behind their families, jobs and school, to undertake an intense, once-in-a-lifetime training experience in Washington, DC focused on helping them become powerhouse veteran advocates for the rest of their life. These inspiring leaders are then unleashed on Washington in small teams for a barnstorming week of IAVA-led Congressional testimony, press conferences, panel discussions, meetings with Senators and Representatives, visits to VA, the Pentagon and the White House. Each first session of Congress, Storm the Hill also introduces IAVA's Policy Agenda and priority legislation.

More details, bios of the Stormers, and a schedule of events can be found at www.StormtheHill.org. And via the hashtag [#StormTheHill](#) on Twitter.