

[VIDEO: "Sexist VA Motto Must Go"- Female Iraq War Vet Testifies to Congress](#)

WASHINGTON, DC (March 22, 2017) -The large and growing number of women who serve in the military must be given the same level of support as their male counterparts, argued Allison Jaslow, Chief of Staff for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), in her powerful testimony before the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee today. The testimony was the latest phase of IAVA's groundbreaking [#SheWhoBorneTheBattle](#) campaign, as it powered through a third day in Washington, corresponding with the Anniversary of the Iraq War and Women's History Month.

"We need to stop hearing stories about women who are "welcomed" at their local VA hospital by staff asking their husband accompanying them how they can help "him". We should be outraged that self-proclaimed patriots are reprimanding women veterans for parking in the "Reserved for Veterans" space at the local grocery store. And we should be ashamed that the disparities in the very services we make available to male veterans are a clear sign to women that they're an afterthought," Jaslow told the committee.

"I deployed twice to Iraq. I was in combat. And after nearly 15 years of women being on the frontlines of our nation's 'War on Terror,' I shouldn't feel like a second-class veteran," she noted.

Nearly 345,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the number of male veterans is expected to decline in the next five years, the women veteran population will increase, and women have taken on new roles and responsibilities throughout the services.

IAVA, the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing post-9/11 veterans and their families, is demanding Congress, the VA and the Trump Administration change the culture to support women veterans. On Tuesday, IAVA joined with Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT) and John Boozman (R-AR) to announce comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to support women veterans. The Deborah Sampson Act, named for a woman war hero who disguised herself as a man in order to serve in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. The historic legislation would Foster Cultural Change, Strengthen Data and Transparency, Recognize and Support the Value of Peer Support, Require coordinated community care and Increase outreach and provide over \$20M in additional VA resources.

Jaslow's riveting 5-minute testimony can be found [HERE](#) (Jaslow's remarks begin 1:08:30).

The testimony received a rousing applause, tremendous traction on social media, and Representative Beto O'Rourke said, "Ms. Jaslow, you knocked it out

of the park! Amazing, effective, fierce!”

Jaslow also outlined IAVA’s other top policy priorities that Congress must address for veterans– including preserving military and education benefits for veterans in the post-9/11 GI Bill, continuing to combat suicide among troops and veterans, and reforming the VA, but noted that their most important priority was fully recognizing and supporting women veterans. [The comprehensive policy agenda](#) is a blueprint for how all Americans can support and empower the “Next Greatest Generation” on issues ranging from military sexual trauma, medical marijuana, traumatic brain injury to employment.