

Wednesday: America's Newest Generation of Vets to Announce 2014 Public Policy Priorities at Joint Congressional Hearing

WHAT: Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff will testify before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Wednesday, March 12 at 10 a.m. in Washington, DC. In a rare opportunity before both houses of Congress, Rieckhoff will present IAVA's 2014 policy agenda, which reflects the top issues affecting the post-9/11 veterans community.

IAVA, the largest non-partisan organization for post-9/11 veterans and their families, has been a driving force in Washington since 2004, most recently advocating for the repeal of cuts to military retirement benefits. This year, a key focus will be a heightened effort to strengthen mental health efforts and prevent veteran suicides.

Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars face multiple challenges when returning home. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at least 22 veterans die by suicide a day, and a recent study found that the suicide rate among young male veterans rose by 44 percent in the past three years. More than 365,000 veterans are stuck in the VA disability claims backlog, waiting more than 125 days for claim. Furthermore, the post-9/11 veteran unemployment rate jumped to 9.2 percent during the month of February, according to the latest report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

WHO: IAVA Founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff

Representatives of four other leading Veteran Service Organizations

House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs

WHEN: Wednesday, March 12 at 10 a.m.

WHERE: Senate Dirksen Building, Room G-50 Washington, DC

Note to media: Please RSVP by emailing press@iava.org or calling 212-982-9699 if you would like a copy of the testimony or would like to arrange an interview with IAVA Founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff.