



October 9, 2015

Mrs. Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chairwoman, Democratic National Committee
430 S Capitol St, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz,

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the country's first and largest non-profit, nonpartisan organization representing post-9/11 veterans. As the leading veteran empowerment organization, our mission is to improve the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans through assistance, awareness and advocacy. Our efforts enable this generation of veterans to lead productive lives and create a country, which honors and supports veterans of all generations.

In the past decade since IAVA's founding, the presidential campaigns and succeeding administrations have dealt with questions of active wars concerning three operations across two countries. Despite monetary and strategic support from Washington, the true burden of war was placed on less than one percent of the population, the 2.8 million service members who readily served in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the wars come to a close and the surrounding political debate subsides, the nation's concern must shift from protecting service members abroad to protecting them at home.

The new generation of veterans is young and capable, but they face unique challenges. Unfortunately, few presidential candidates are speaking about how they would affect positive change for our members and their families. **To spur this essential debate, we urge you and the debate sponsors to select an upcoming Presidential Debate to be focused exclusively on veteran and military issues.** Alternatively, we would ask you to support an IAVA-hosted event focused on one-on-one conversations with each candidate on veterans issues. In doing so, the American people will better understand how each candidate will take care of those who have served the highest calling in our nation: supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States.

IAVA and our more than 425,000 members and supporters are paying close attention to what candidates are, or are not, saying around veterans issues. Sponsoring a national debate focused on veterans and military issues would be the perfect platform for each of the parties candidates to share their vision with the American public.

Sincerely,

Paul Rieckhoff
Founder and CEO
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)