MELISSA A. BRYANT

Advocate | Consultant

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Melissa Bryant is a veterans' advocate and licensed consultant with nearly 20 years of combined experience in federal government management, nonprofit advocacy, and nonprofit executive leadership.

Melissa is currently the National Legislative Director for The American Legion. She previously served as the Chief Policy Officer for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). As the head of IAVA's policy division and all its Washington, DC operations, she oversaw the legislative, research, and government affairs departments

A former Army Captain and Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veteran, Melissa's extensive record of public service includes critical roles in both military and civil service as a senior intelligence officer prior to joining IAVA. As a Department of Defense and Intelligence Community plans, policy, and operations managing expert, she served in key leadership positions with the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Joint Staff, the United States Military Academy, and Army Intelligence. She was successful in building "coalitions of the willing" to advance operational and strategic objectives while developing and implementing plans and policy for the defense and intelligence communities.

Considered a community thought leader, she is widely recognized for championing causes impacting women and minority servicemembers and veterans, highlighting the distinct challenges this growing population faces and pushing for smart policy solutions.

Melissa has provided remarks in dozens of press conferences, participated as both a panelist and moderator in a variety of venues, delivered numerous oral and written testimonies before Congressional and Administration hearings, as well as

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conducted live and taped interviews on CNN, NPR, CBS Radio, PBS NewsHour, C-SPAN Washington Journal , MSNBC, HLN , local television segments, web-based and print articles, and much more.

Melissa is an ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science cum laude from Hampton University, is an alumna of Howard University School of Law, and also holds a Master of Arts in Policy Management from Georgetown University. She was named an Aspen Institute Ideas Festival Scholar in 2018, and her civil and military service awards include the Joint Civilian Service Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, plus dozens more accolades and honors.