



IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN
VETERANS OF AMERICA

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Statement for the Record
Submitted to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Legislative Hearing on Pending Legislation
May 20, 2026

Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and our more than 425,000 members and supporters nationwide, thank you for the opportunity to submit this Statement for the Record regarding legislation under consideration before the Committee.

As the leading voice for post-9/11 veterans, IAVA remains focused on ensuring veterans can access timely, high-quality health care and benefits, successfully transition to civilian life, and receive the support and recognition they have earned through service. The needs of today's veterans continue to evolve, and Congress must ensure the systems designed to support them evolve as well.

IAVA writes today in strong support of several measures included in this hearing that closely align with our legislative priorities and longstanding advocacy efforts.

H.R. 4876, "Reproductive Freedom for Veterans Act"

IAVA strongly supports the Reproductive Freedom for Veterans Act. Veterans should not lose access to reproductive health care (or even counseling) simply because they rely on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for their care. With women veterans being one of the fastest growing populations within the VA system, their policies must reflect the realities and needs of those veterans and their families.

Ensuring access to comprehensive reproductive health care is fundamentally tied to health equity, economic stability, and long-term wellbeing. Veterans deserve the ability to make private medical decisions in consultation with their health care providers without unnecessary barriers or political interference. IAVA appreciates the Committee's continued attention to this issue and urges swift consideration of this legislation.

H.R. 3869, "Every Veteran Housed Act"

IAVA supports continued efforts to address veteran homelessness and housing insecurity. While veteran homelessness has declined over the last decade, far too many veterans remain at risk, particularly in communities facing rising housing costs, shortages of affordable housing, and gaps in supportive services.

Stable housing is foundational to successful transition, employment, health care access, mental health recovery, and family stability. Legislation aimed at improving housing access and reducing barriers to assistance is especially important as many post-9/11 veterans continue navigating the long-term impacts of service-connected disabilities, economic instability, and mental health challenges.



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IAVA views the Every Veteran Housed Act as a strong complement to other efforts such as the End Veteran Homelessness Act (H.R. 1957), recognizing that ending veteran homelessness requires both expanding access to supportive housing services and improving the delivery and utilization of existing housing resources. We appreciate the Committee's continued focus on ensuring no veteran is left without safe and stable housing.

H.R. 1391, "Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act of 2025"

IAVA strongly supports protections for student veterans impacted by institutional fraud, school closures, or administrative failures outside of their control.

Student veterans should not lose earned education benefits because of misconduct or failures by educational institutions. Post-9/11 veterans rely heavily on education benefits to pursue economic mobility, career advancement, and long-term financial stability after service. Restoring improperly lost benefits helps ensure veterans are not unfairly penalized while pursuing higher education and workforce opportunities.

Discussion Drafts Related to Toxic Exposure Oversight

IAVA supports efforts to strengthen toxic exposure oversight and improve accountability surrounding implementation of toxic exposure-related policies and programs within the VA.

Post-9/11 veterans continue to face the long-term health impacts of toxic exposures sustained during military service, and the successful implementation of the PACT Act and related initiatives remains critically important. Oversight, transparency, scientific expertise, and sustained stakeholder engagement will all be essential to ensuring veterans receive timely access to care and benefits associated with toxic exposure conditions.

IAVA welcomes continued Committee attention to these issues and encourages Congress to ensure any advisory or oversight structures established are transparent, adequately resourced, and inclusive of veteran community perspectives.

Additional Considerations

While IAVA appreciates the Committee's continued focus on improving accountability and modernization across the VA, we also encourage careful consideration of the potential downstream impacts of several proposals under consideration, including the VA Research Reform Act of 2025, the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Oversight Act of 2025, and the Veterans Readiness and Employment Improvement and Accountability Act of 2025.

As Congress evaluates reforms affecting research activities, advisory committee structures, and veteran employment and rehabilitation programs, it is essential that changes do not unintentionally reduce veteran stakeholder engagement, narrow eligibility, create new administrative barriers, limit transparency, or disrupt continuity of services for veterans currently relying on these programs. In particular, advisory committees and research initiatives often provide critical subject matter expertise and direct veteran community input that help inform effective policymaking and implementation across VA.



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IAVA encourages the Committee to ensure any reforms preserve meaningful veteran representation, maintain transparency and oversight mechanisms, and prioritize veteran outcomes and access to services throughout implementation.

IAVA appreciates the Committee's continued bipartisan work on behalf of veterans and their families. As Congress considers these proposals, we urge lawmakers to remain focused on policies that improve real-world outcomes for veterans by expanding access to care, reducing barriers to benefits, supporting successful transition, and addressing the evolving needs of the post-9/11 generation.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide our views and look forward to continued partnership in advancing policies that honor the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

Respectfully submitted,

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