



IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN  
VETERANS OF AMERICA

Nov. 30, 2017

The Honorable Johnny Isakson  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

Dear Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Tester:

On behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America's (IAVA) more than 400,000 members, I am pleased to offer our support for the bipartisan *Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017*.

We greatly appreciate your Committee working with, and soliciting input from, leading Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to get us to this point. We are pleased that the bill responsibly invests in upgrading VA's health care system and puts the veteran's needs first by empowering the VA to coordinate patient care wherever it can best be delivered.

We also thank you for the inclusion of provisions to inform veterans of their benefits, increase data tracking and reporting, emphasize creation of standardized guidelines and standards for care, in addition to language to extend the VA Caregivers program to earlier eras of veterans. And, IAVA looks forward to working with the Committee to ensure that 21st Century infrastructure and technology needs for the proposed reforms are rightly built into the system.

We must reaffirm IAVA's expectation that the Committee now continue to stand with every leading VSO and oppose any efforts to alter this draft legislation in ways that would remove the VA from its critical role of coordinating veterans' health care and would deprive the VA of essential resources.

Again, thank you for working collaboratively on this legislation with IAVA and our partner VSOs like Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and other leading VSOs to ensure veterans receive timely access to quality health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Paul Rieckhoff', is written in a cursive style.

Paul Rieckhoff  
Founder and CEO  
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America