

Veterans Service Organizations Statements of Support for Chairman Tester

“It's a great day for Montana's veterans, and speaking in particular for the members of the Montana Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), it will be not only be a honor, but very much a pleasure to work with Senator Jon Tester, who has not only earned the respect of his Congressional peers, but also with us Montana folk, to be placed in such an esteemed position,” **said Montana National VFW Representative Tom Johnson.**

“Senator Tester assuming the Chairmanship will be a great benefit to the veterans of Montana and our nation,” **said Department Adjutant of the American Legion Department of Montana Gary White.** “The American Legion of Montana looks forward to his continued success in strengthening the Veterans Administration and their services to our veterans.”

“The American Legion has worked closely with Senator Tester and his office for many years. During the time we have worked with him, he has proven himself to be deeply committed to improving VA care and all of the services that VA provides to veterans and their families,” **said American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford.** “The American Legion congratulates Senator Tester on his elevation to Chairmanship of the Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee and we look forward to working with him to ensure we maintain a robust and healthy VA to serve our nation's veterans.”

“Senator Tester has been an unyielding champion for our nation's veterans, helping to advance legislation to reform VA health care, improve programs for caregivers and women veterans, and ensure veterans exposed to toxic substances receive the benefits they deserve, among many other critical issues,” **said Disabled American Veterans (DAV) National Commander Stephen “Butch” Whitehead.** “DAV congratulates him on his chairmanship, and we look forward to working with him and Senator Moran in the continued bipartisan spirit of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.”

“AMVETS is pleased to hear of Senator Jon Tester's elevation to Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the 117th Congress,” **said AMVETS Executive Director Joe Chenelly.** “AMVETS has worked closely with Senator Tester and supported legislation sponsored by the Senator, including, the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019*, a measure that approves benefits for Vietnam War veterans suffering from bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's-like symptoms (conditions thought to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange), and more. We're excited to continue our work with the VA Committee with Senator Tester at the helm of the Senate side.”

“The Association of the United States Navy is pleased to hear that Senator Jon Tester of Montana will be elevated to Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs,” **said Association of the United States Navy (AUSN) Board of Directors Chairman Daniel X. Feliz.** “As Ranking Member of the committee, Tester has been a true friend to our veterans, supporting critical legislation to ensure they have the care and benefits they need. We thank former Chairman Jerry Moran of Kansas for his leadership and are confident he and Chairman Tester will continue to fight for our veterans going forward. We urge Committee leadership to tackle toxic exposure issues that continue to affect our veterans, such as ensuring passage of *the*

TEAM Act to address burn pits and other threats to our veterans' health, as well as legislation addressing ongoing problems caused by herbicide use on Guam. We expect great things in the 117th Congress, and are confident that the right leadership is in place on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. AUSN stands ready to support the Committee's ongoing work on behalf of our veterans and their families.”

“The Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) congratulates Senator Tester on his elevation to Chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee (SVAC),” **said BVA National Service Director of Veterans Benefits and Policy Jim Vale.** “Senator Tester’s steadfast leadership and legislative achievements ensured blinded veterans access to Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation services, special adaptive housing grants, and website accessibility—by eliminating barriers—while increasing transparency and accountability. He has championed expanded access to health care for women and Vietnam veterans, while spearheading legislation adding 3 new conditions for Agent Orange exposure. Senator Tester has proven time and again that veterans benefits are hard-earned, and his willingness to stand shoulder to shoulder—with all veterans—is a testament to his leadership and preparedness to serve as our next SVAC Chairman.”

“On behalf of our more than 425,000 members, I offer my warmest congratulations to Senator Tester on his elevation to Chairman,” **said Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) CEO Jeremy Butler.** “His untiring commitment to our nation's veterans, from his leadership on landmark legislation to address the crisis of veteran suicide and the due recognition of women veterans, to his focus on benefits for those with toxic exposures like Agent Orange, underscores that there is no greater friend our community can have in this important post at this time. We look forward to his bipartisan and effective stewardship of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee!”

“MOAA is heartened to hear of Senator Tester’s elevation to Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs,” **said President and CEO Lieutenant General Dana Atkins, USAF Ret, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).** “Senator Tester has been a steadfast ally and partner to all uniformed servicemembers, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. This commitment is reflective in the passage of the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*, the *VA Mission Act of 2018*, the inclusion of three new presumptives for Agent Orange exposure in the *FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act*, and hundreds of other measures to improve the health and well-being of those who serve our nation. And in 2019, MOAA presented Senator Tester with the Arthur T. Marix Congressional Leadership Award for his overwhelming commitment and service to the veteran community. He brings with him years of unique and credible understanding of the challenges facing rural veterans through his experiences as a leader in Montana. We look forward to supporting both Senators Tester and Moran as we collectively work together to continue to serve veterans in the 117th Congress.”

“The National Association of Counties congratulates Senator Tester on his elevation to Chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs,” **said Matt Chase, CEO, National Association of Counties (NACo).** “In his role as Ranking Member, Senator Tester worked in a bipartisan fashion with Senator Moran to secure critical supports for our nation’s veterans, and we trust he will continue this productive work across the aisle as Chair. As critical partners with the federal

government in serving our veterans, county governments look forward to working with Senator Tester and the entire the Committee to ensure these vital members of our communities thrive.”

“The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) would like to congratulate Senator Jon Tester on being chosen to Chair the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. Senator Tester has a long track record of working with County, State and VSO partners to improve the care and benefits veterans receive and deserve,” **said NACVSO President Herman Breuer.** “NACVSO looks forward to continuing that work with Senator Tester in the 117th Congress.”

"Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) looks forward to working with Senator Tester in his new role as Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee," **said PVA Executive Director Carl Blake.** "Many challenges lay ahead for VA in the coming months as the Department responds to a global pandemic and continues to implement many important laws passed in recent years. We have every confidence that Chairman Tester will faithfully lead the committee in a way that ensures VA remains strong and fully able to meet the needs of veterans, including those with catastrophic disabilities like spinal cord injury."

“TREA congratulates Ranking Member Tester on his elevation to Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee,” **said Bill McCabe, Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications at TREA: The Enlisted Association.** “We have greatly appreciated his leadership, transparency, and commitment on behalf of veterans and their families and look forward to working with the Chairman and his staff in the 117th.”

“The VFW applauds the announcement of Senator Jon Tester as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs,” **said VFW Executive Director B.J. Lawrence.** “Senator Tester has been a constant advocate for veterans during his tenure on the committee and we are confident he will continue to lead bipartisan efforts to help veterans as the Chairman.”

“We look forward to working with Senator Tester in his new role as Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee,” **said National President and CEO of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) John Rowan.** “This Committee has always been bi-partisan, so we have had the pleasure of working with the Senator for a number of years, as well as all his colleagues, on behalf of America’s veterans and their families.”

“Veterans have a true champion as chairman of the committee, in Senator Tester. He has always been there, fighting efforts to privatize the VA, and expanding service for rural veterans,” **said Jon Soltz, Iraq War Veteran and Chairman of VoteVets.** “Between him, Chairman Takano in the House and Secretary-designate McDonough, veterans will have a triad of strength guiding veterans policy in the US.”

“Senator Tester has a long history of working National Guard issues and we are excited to work with the Veterans Affairs Committee and Chairman Tester during the 117th Congress,” **said Command Sergeant Major (Ret) Karen Craig, President of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS).** “We know Senator Tester always has the

best interests of National Guard servicemembers at the top of his priorities. We look forward to working with him as Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee.”