



# 2019 MEMBER SURVEY

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA



# //WHO IS IAVA?

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the premier veterans advocacy and support organization on the planet. Every day, we fight for veterans. Hard. We are the tip-of-the spear non-profit engine of impact that connects, unites and empowers over 400,000 veterans and allies nationwide.

Founded by an Iraq veteran in 2004, IAVA is the non-partisan leader in advocacy, public awareness and 1-on-1 case-management support. We organize locally, and drive historic impacts nationally.

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**I**t was a historic year for IAVA's post-9/11 generation of veterans in 2018. We led the national dialogue, united thousands nationwide on the ground and online, and unveiled our urgent Big 6 Advocacy Priorities. These 6 items are the areas that IAVA members declared as the most pressing issues for the newest generation of veterans. IAVA members of all backgrounds, nationwide, united and fought for change on Capitol Hill, in the media, and on the ground to address the biggest issues impacting our community of over three million men and women who have served since 9/11.

Last year also brought huge obstacles. Demand for veterans services continued to climb, suicide took countless lives and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remained riddled with problems. The VA saw massive turbulence and a major leadership change as Secretary Shulkin was ousted and Secretary Wilkie was named, but only after Dr. Ronny Jackson withdrew under a swirl of controversy. And on Veterans Day 2018, news broke that thousands of veterans had received late or inaccurate GI Bill payments, throwing many in our community into financial hardship before the holidays. And a wild year ended with the widely-respected Secretary of Defense and retired Marine Corps General Mattis stepping down.

Coming off of all that, 2019 will be the most important year for veterans in modern times. As Washington continues to be marred by partisanship, gridlock and government shutdowns, our needs are often relegated and our brothers and sisters fighting overseas are often forgotten. But veterans stand ready to continue to serve -- and represent a source of hope and leadership for all Americans. Our voices have never been more vital.

IAVA's annual member survey represents those voices. It is the richest, most comprehensive non-governmental survey of Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans in America -- and one of the largest. We asked vets about suicide, employment, education, and VA reform -- and sought IAVA member opinions on hot topics like firearms, immigration, support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Trump's military parade proposal and the NFL protests.

Over the last few years, through this widely-cited survey, the collective voices of IAVA members have driven the national conversation for veterans and powered our current Big 6 Advocacy Priorities and broader Policy Agenda and victories including the 2016 Campaign to

Defend the GI Bill, the 2014 Campaign to Combat Suicide, the 2013 Campaign to End the VA Backlog, the Vow to Hire Heroes Act and much more.

But post-9/11 veterans are not a monolith. Our community is diverse and ever-changing. However, there are key numbers and trends that can not be ignored. This survey is a continued call to action on veteran suicide -- with 59 percent reporting knowing a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide. Meanwhile, burn pit exposure continues to rise, with a stunning 82 percent reporting exposure. Over 80 percent support legalizing medical cannabis. And for the first time since we began polling, over half of IAVA members support legalizing recreational cannabis.

This survey also shows that post-9/11 vets are rising. Ninety-seven percent of IAVA members are registered to vote. And as Washington welcomes a new, bipartisan "Camouflage Wave" of veterans to Capitol Hill, 86 percent of IAVA members believe that having more veterans in Congress will have a positive impact on Washington's ability to address national issues.

This survey is a major driver for all that IAVA does. And it should be a roadmap for all Americans -- from the Pentagon to Silicon Valley to the White House.

The post-9/11 generation of veterans has served for year after year. They have been there and done that. And they have plenty to say about their experiences and the state of our country that can help guide our nation forward to a brighter, stronger future.

We appreciate you taking the time to hear our voices and learn more.

Best,  
**Paul Rieckhoff**  
Founder and CEO  
Iraq and Afghanistan  
Veterans of America

# THE BIG SIX ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

This “Big 6” contains the challenges and opportunities that IAVA members care about most—and see as areas where we can uniquely make an impact. IAVA members are poised to educate the public, design solutions for positive impact, and lead the way to the future.



## **Key Findings from the Big 6 Priorities**

### **1. Mental Health and Suicide Prevention**

43% report suicidal ideation since joining the military, a 6% rise from 2017

### **2. VA Reform**

81% rate VA care as average or above average

### **3. Toxic Exposures, including Burn Pits**

82% report exposure to burn pits or toxic exposures

### **4. Education Benefits**

78% agree that the post-9/11 GI Bill is important for recruitment

### **5. Women Veterans**

78% of IAVA members feel that it's important IAVA focus on the issues impacting women veterans

### **6. Utilization of Medical Cannabis**

90% IAVA members support researching cannabis for medicinal purposes

# //PROFILE OF AN IAVA MEMBER



AVA members served around the world, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Bahrain, Syria, Kuwait and other locations globally. They've deployed in every major combat operation since 9/11 and continue to serve at home, through community and veteran service organizations.

# 76% would recommend military service to a family member or friend.

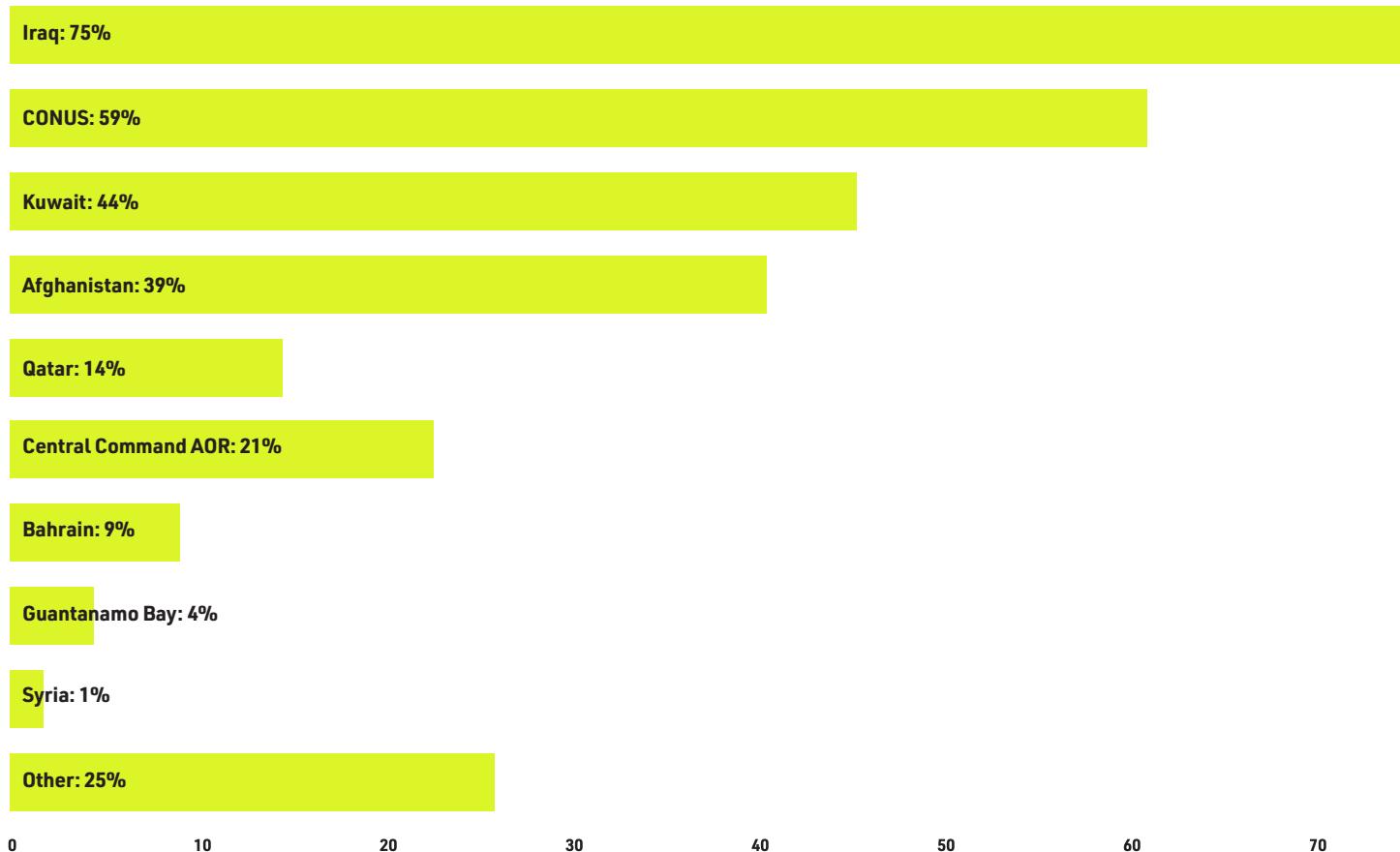
## Branch of Service



## Officer or Enlisted

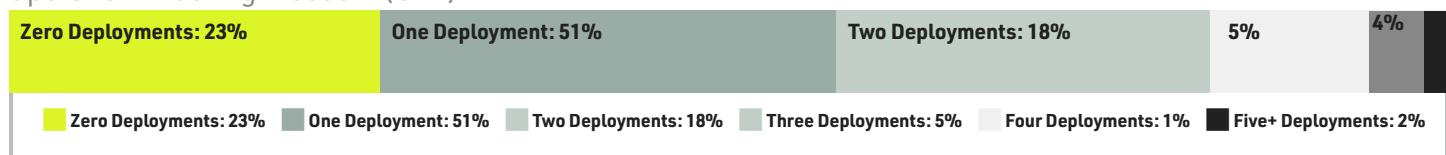


## Where have you served on Active Duty?

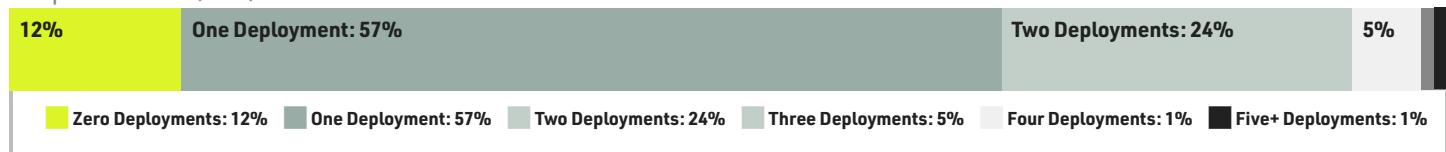


## Number of Deployments

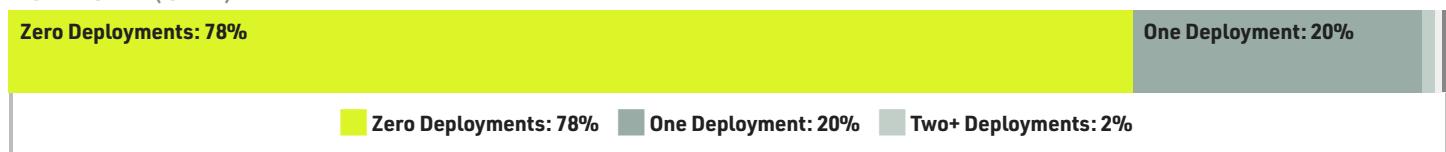
### Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)



### Iraqi Freedom (OIF)



### New Dawn (OND)



### Resolute Support (ORS)

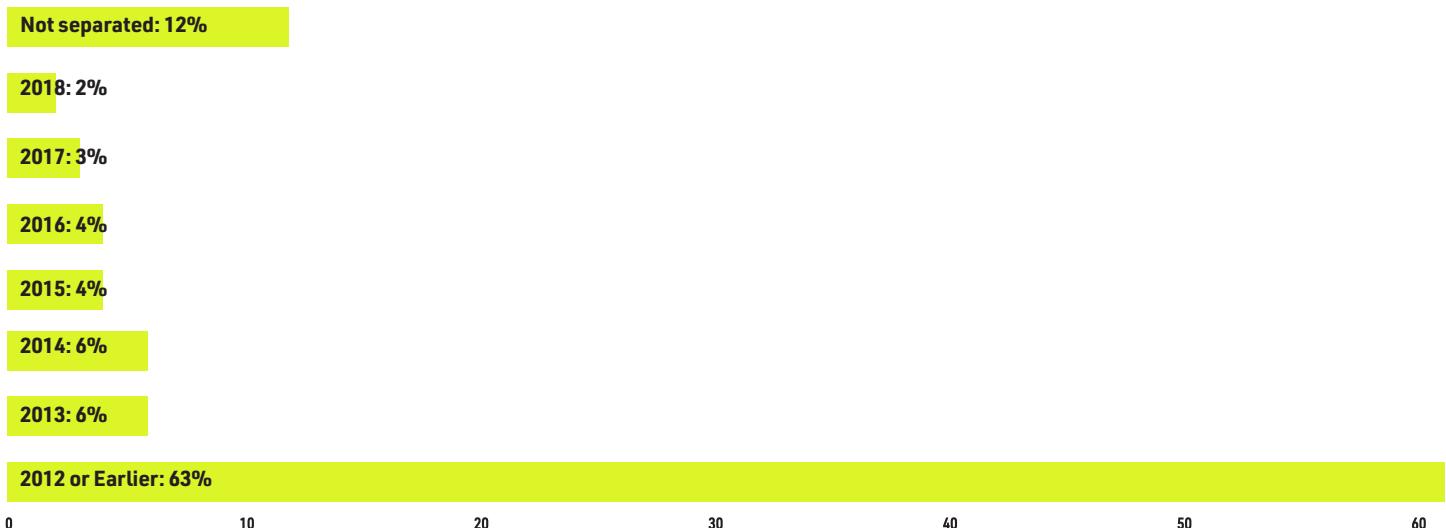


### Inherent Resolve (OIR)



**58%** Were, or are currently, a member of the National Guard or Reserves

## Year Separated from the Military



## Discharge Status

Honorable discharge: 98%

Honorable discharge: 98% General discharge: 1% Other than Honorable Discharge: 0.5% Dishonorable Discharge: 0.5%

## How important is it for you to interact regularly with other veterans and military service members?

Extremely important: 26%

Very important: 32%

Moderately important: 26%

12%

4%

Extremely important: 26% Very important: 32% Moderately important: 26% Slightly important: 12% Not at all important: 4%

## How do you interact with other veterans and military service members?

Social media: 53%

In my daily life: 48%

At work: 44%

Meet-ups: 28%

Calling on the phone: 28%

Social clubs: 18%

Video chats: 2%

Other: 12%

0 10 20 30 40 50

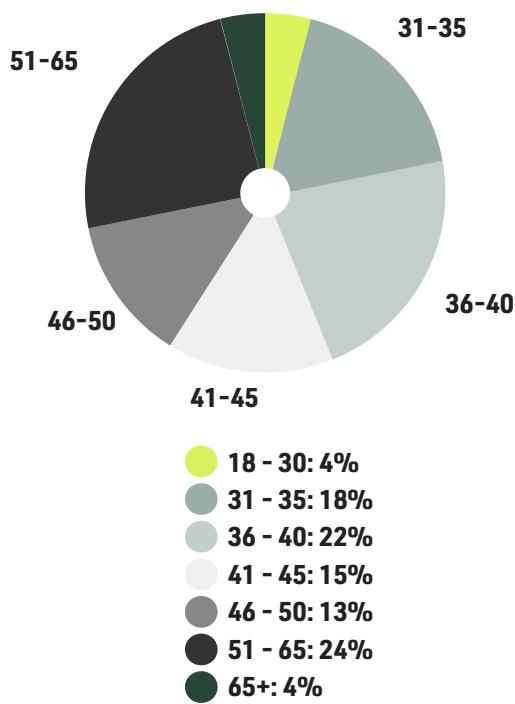
## Gender

Male: 86%

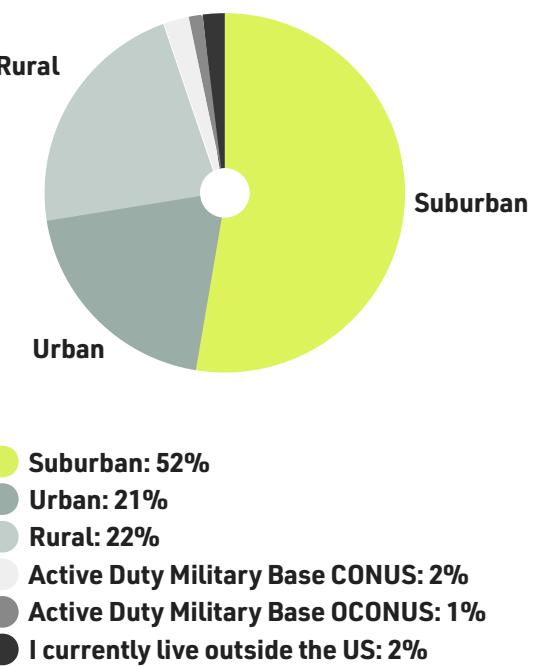
Female: 11%

Male: 86% Female: 11% Gender Variant/Nonconforming/Transgender: 1% Other: 1% Prefer Not To Answer: 1%

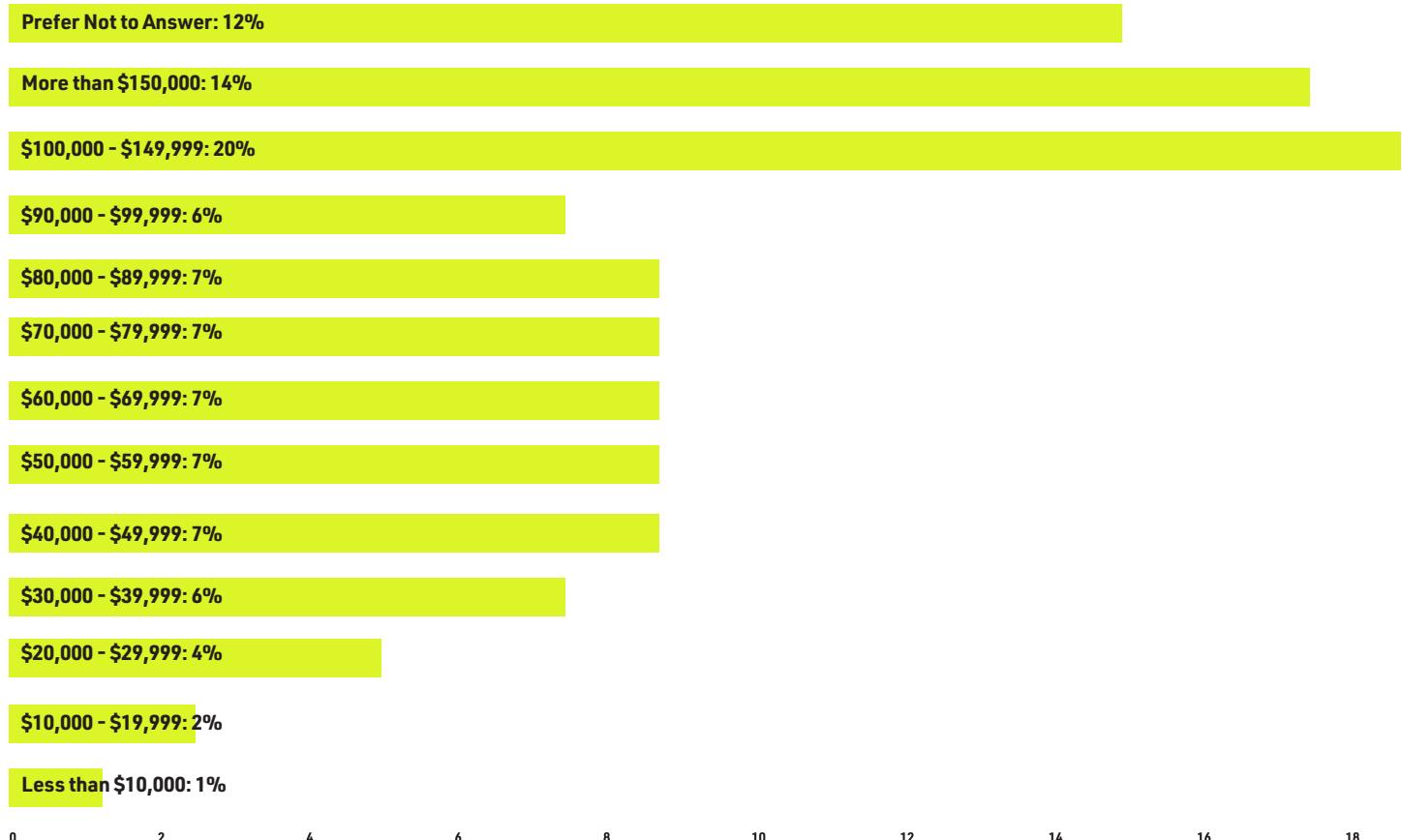
## Age



## Community

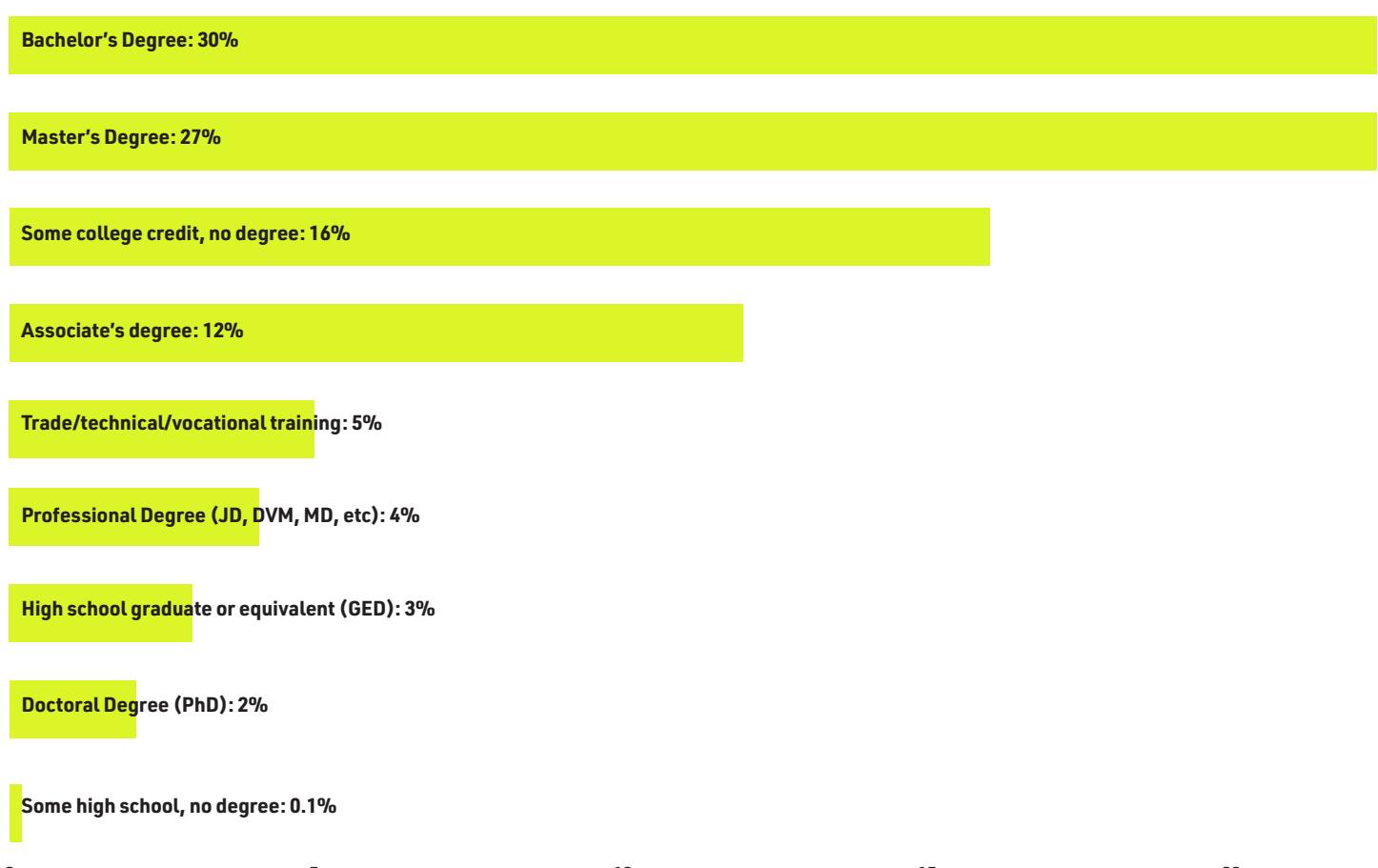


## Household Income

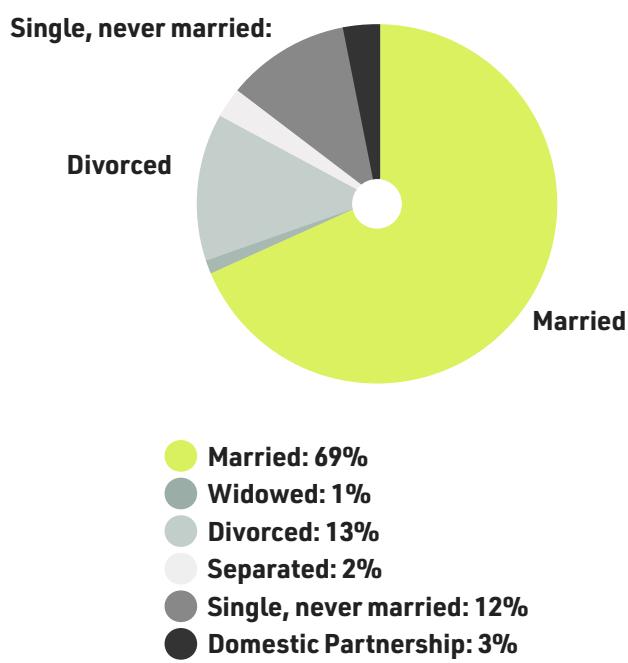


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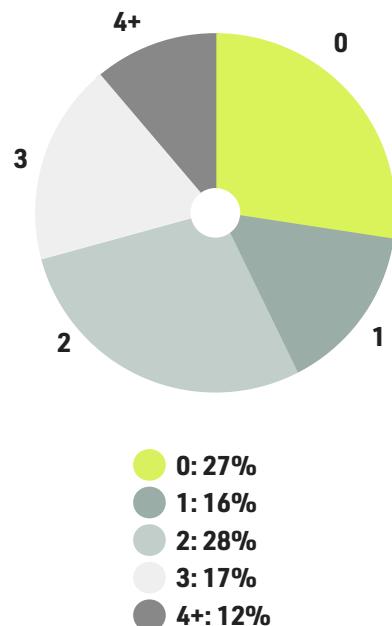
## Education



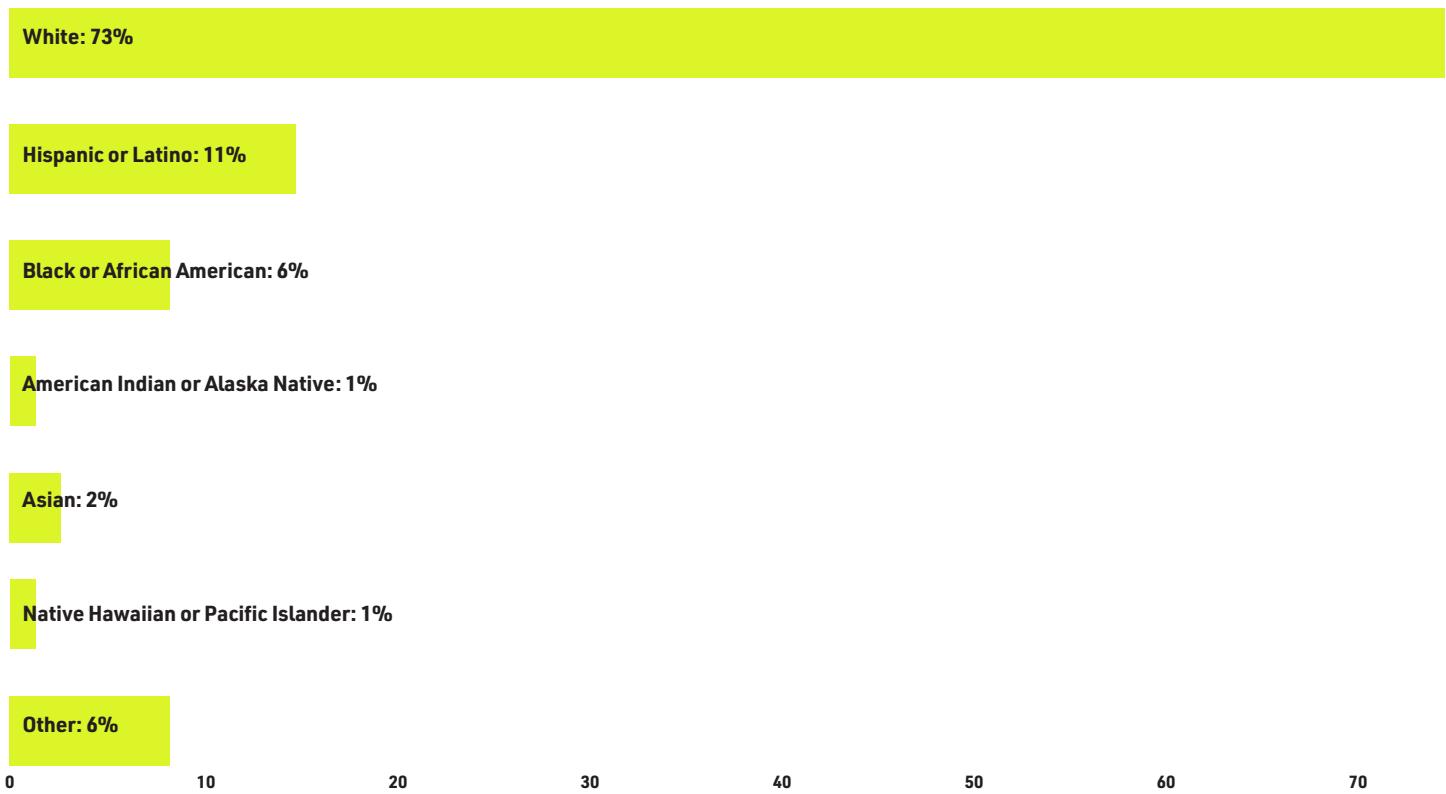
## Marital Status



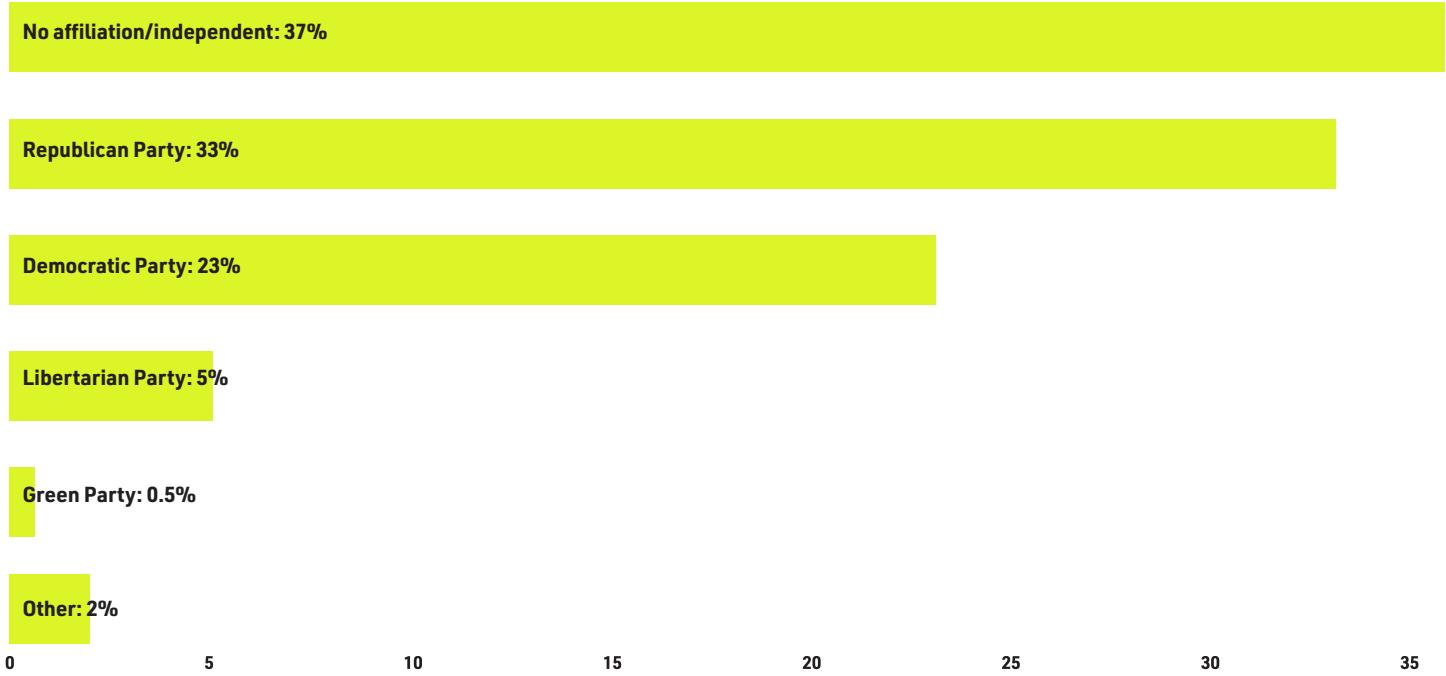
## Children



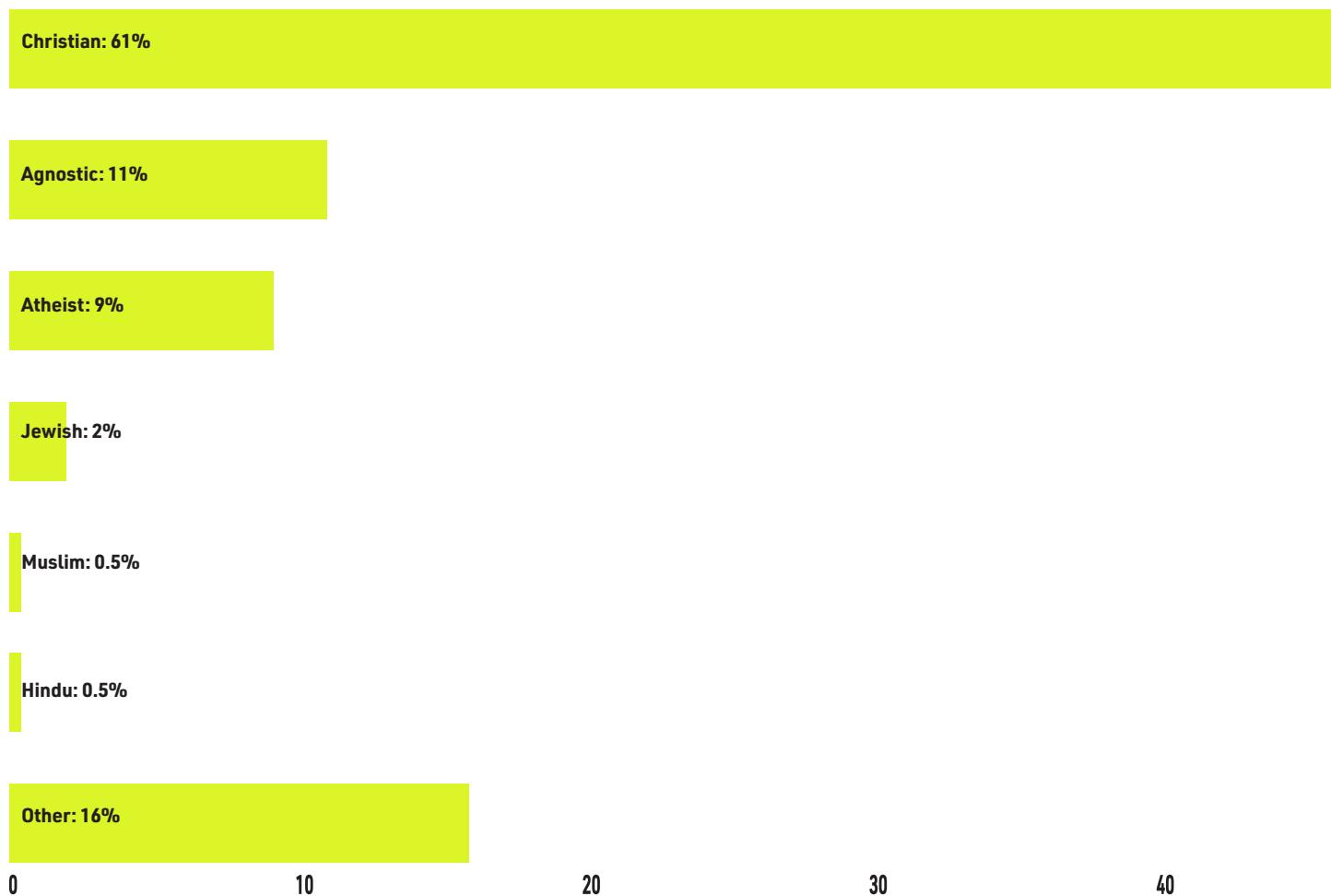
## Ethnicity



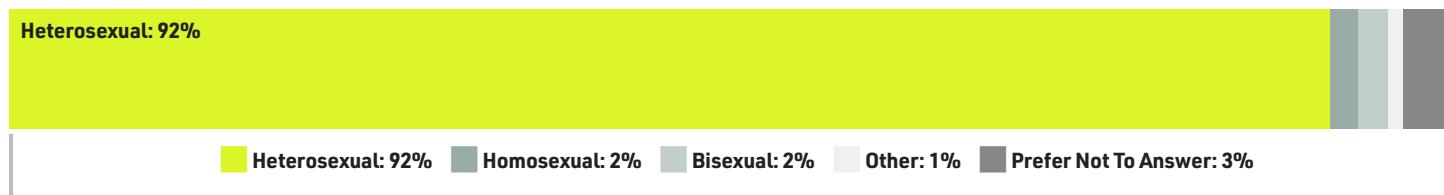
## Political Party Affiliation



## Religious Affiliation



## Sexual Orientation



# //POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT



AVVA members are incredibly engaged in the policies and politics affecting the nation. From voting to speaking out on the issues that matter most, IAVA members are an important voice in American political life.

**86%**

**think having more veterans in Congress would have a positive impact Congress to address national issues.**

**36%**

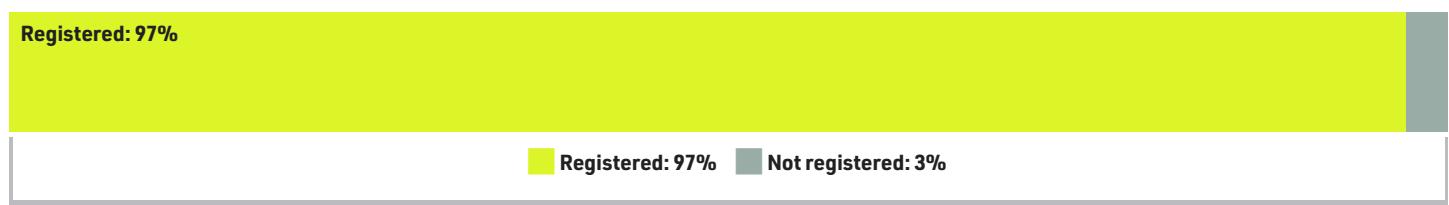
**have considered running for public office.**

**89%**

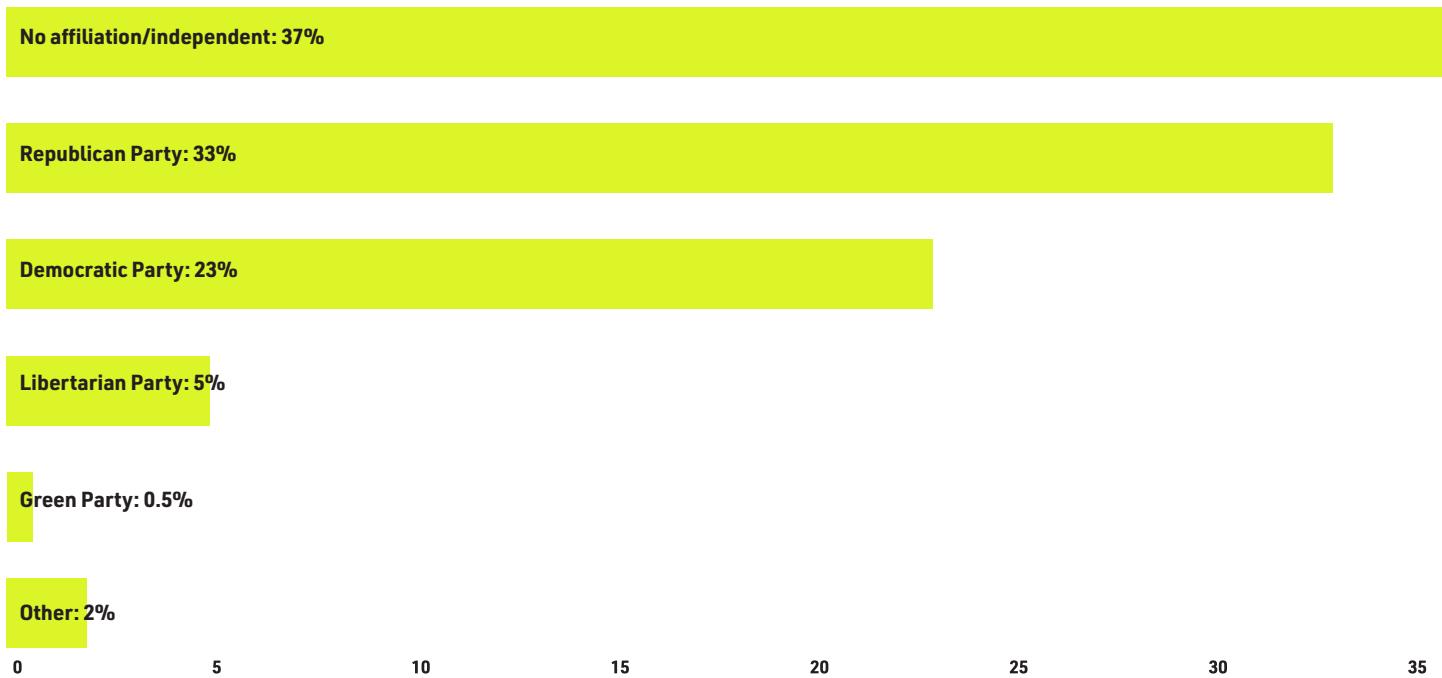
**definitely planned on voting in 2018 Midterm Elections.\***

\*Reflects data collected before November 6, 2018

## Registered to Vote



## Political Party Affiliation



## Top 5 Issues Influencing Support for Political Candidate

1. Veterans Issues
2. Economy
3. Military/defense issues
4. Health Care
5. Gun control/2nd Amendment rights

# //POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS



AVA Members are engaged with the news of the day and have varying degrees of trust and support for political figures.

**46%**

**believe President Trump acts in the interest of veterans.**

**25%**

**believe Congress acts in the interest of veterans.**

**68%**

**believe the American public supports veterans.**

## Which of the following most closely resembles your opinion on the following statements?

The American public supports veterans.



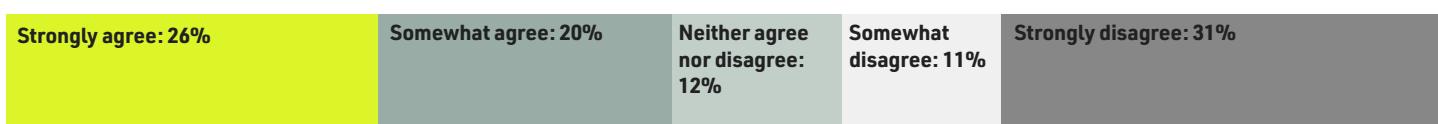
Strongly agree: 23% Somewhat agree: 45% Neither agree nor disagree: 17% Somewhat disagree: 11% Strongly disagree: 4%

Congress acts in the interest of veterans.



Strongly agree: 2% Somewhat agree: 23% Neither agree nor disagree: 22% Somewhat disagree: 31% Strongly disagree: 22%

President Trump acts in the interest of veterans.



Strongly agree: 26% Somewhat agree: 20% Neither agree nor disagree: 12% Somewhat disagree: 11% Strongly disagree: 31%

Employers see value in hiring veterans.



Strongly agree: 8% Somewhat agree: 38% Neither agree nor disagree: 24% Somewhat disagree: 21% Strongly disagree: 9%

The American public understands the sacrifices of veterans.



Strongly agree: 3% Somewhat agree: 16% Neither agree nor disagree: 14% Somewhat disagree: 36% Strongly disagree: 31%

Top 5 mediums IAVA members get their news through:

1. Websites/Apps
2. Online Newspapers
3. Cable Television
4. Social media
5. Radio

# //EMPLOYMENT



Unemployment has been consistently declining, particularly for the post-9/11 generation. This year, we continue to see this trend among IAVA members with the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded. But job satisfaction, underemployment, veteran-friendly employment practices and other factors continue to impact the overall employment outlook for the post-9/11 generation.

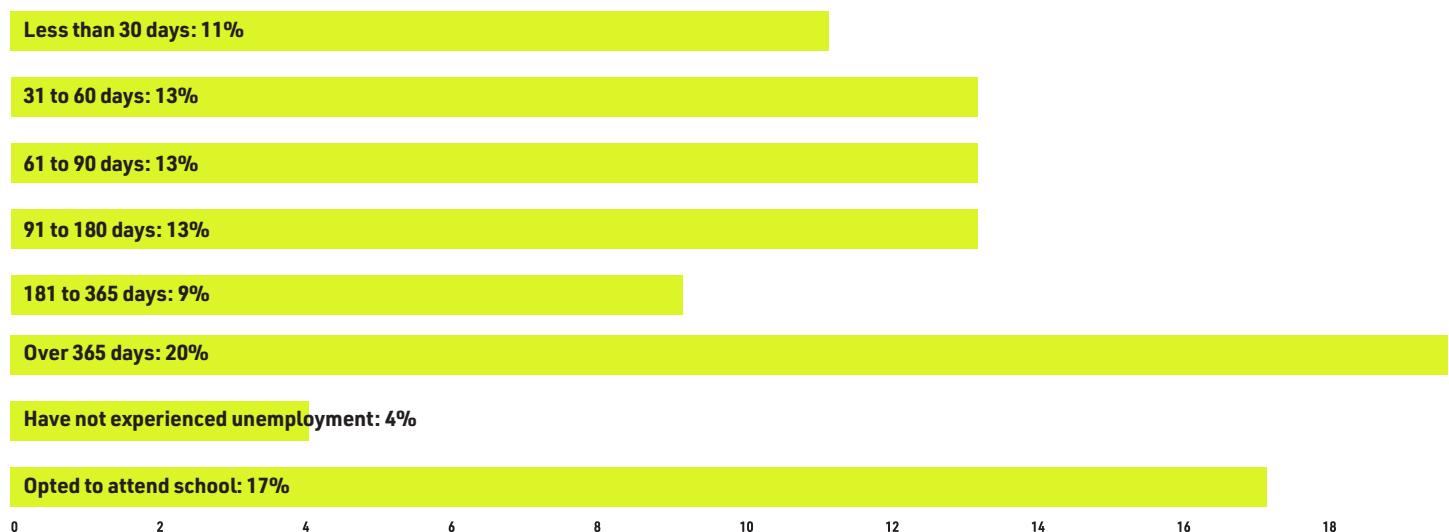
## Did you have a job secured before you left the military?

Yes: 31%

No: 69%

Yes: 31% No: 69%

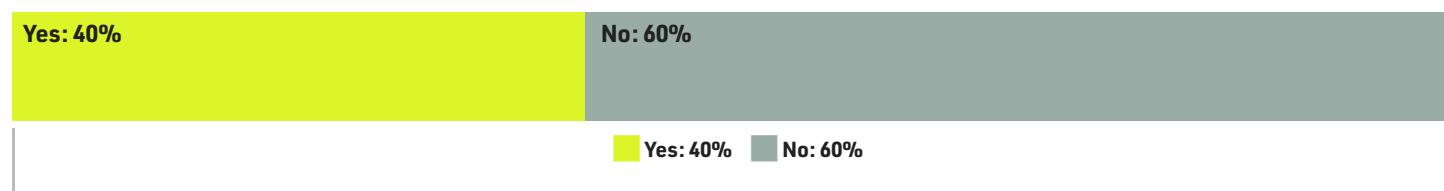
## How long were you without a job after transitioning out of the military?



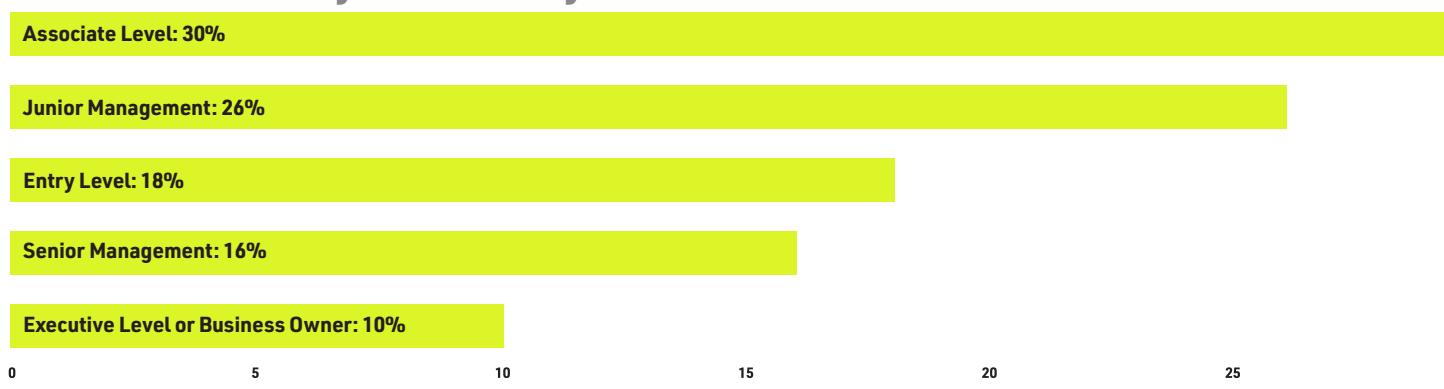
## Top 3 Job Incentives

1. Salary/benefits package
2. Job is meaningful
3. Translating military skills

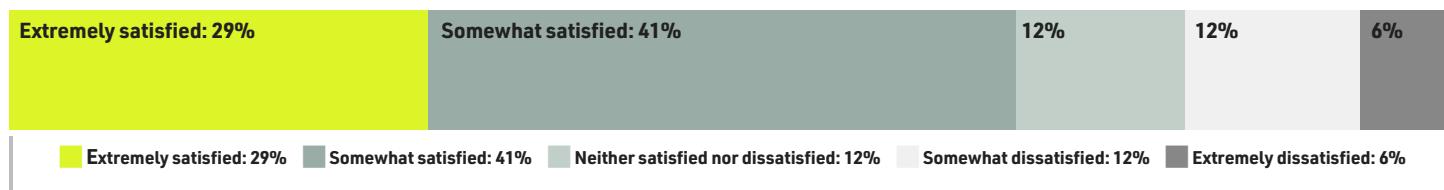
Did you receive support/training for transitioning to the civilian workforce before leaving the military?



## At which level do you currently work?



Are you personally satisfied with your current job?





#### **Top 5 Job Satisfaction Factors:**

1. The environment and/or people
2. Job is mission driven/has an impact
3. Opportunity to apply skills/abilities
4. Compensation
5. Job is challenging

#### **Top 5 Reasons Unsatisfied with Job:**

1. Job does not best use my skills
2. The environment and/or people
3. Compensation
4. Job does not match my education/experience level
5. Job is not challenging

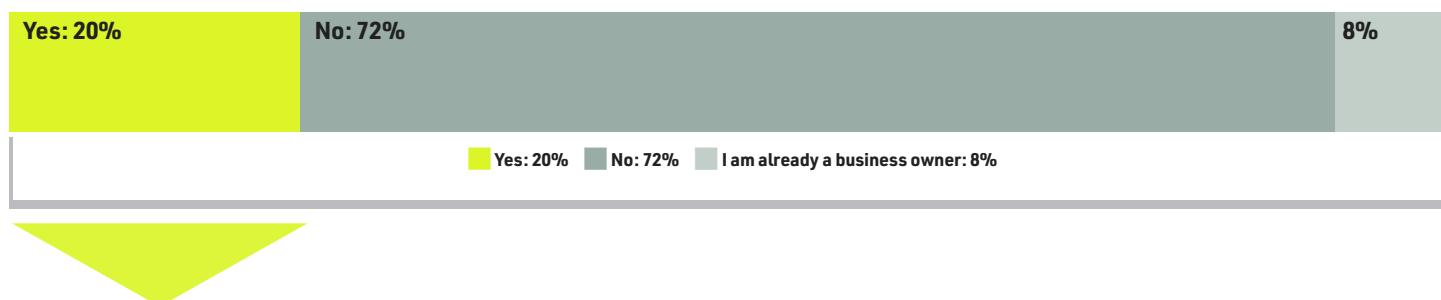
#### **Top 5 Challenges faced in finding work:**

1. Competing with candidates in the workforce longer
2. Lacking required education/certification
3. Explaining how military skills translate
4. Employers avoid hiring veterans
5. Mental health injuries

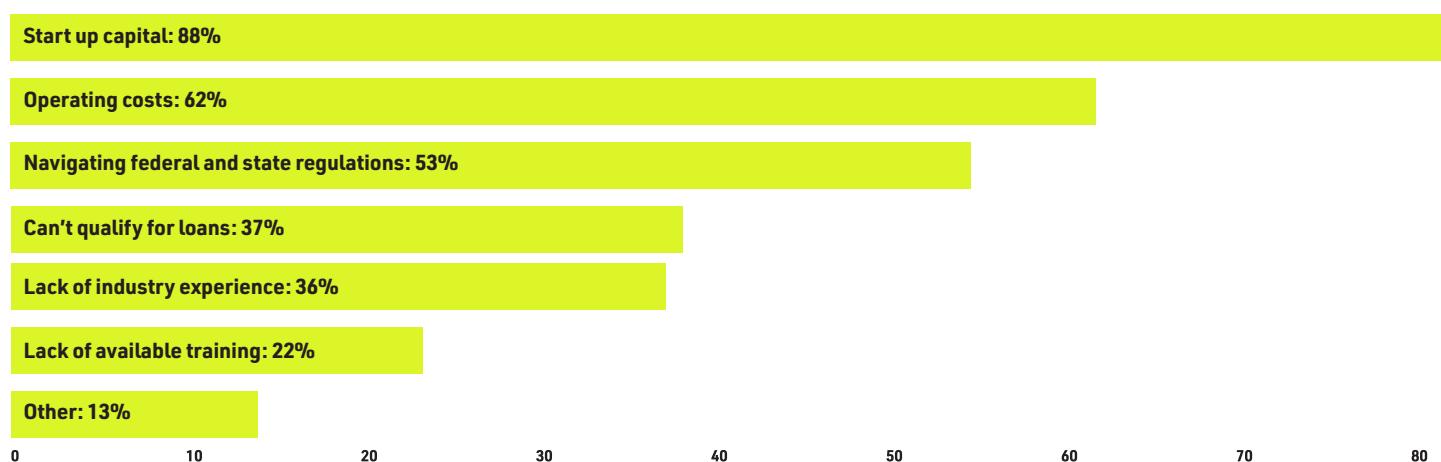
#### **Top 3 Reasons Not Looking for Work:**

1. Family responsibilities
2. Health concerns
3. Childcare conflicts / In school or trainings

#### **Plans to start own business or non-profit enterprise:**



#### **What challenges do you anticipate for starting your business/non-profit?**



**38%** Are aware of VA/Department of Labor small business support programs.

# //SUICIDE



For nearly a decade, IAVA and the veteran community have called for immediate action by our nation's leaders to appropriately respond to this crisis of 20 military and veterans dying every day from suicide. IAVA members are at the forefront of this crisis. Every year we see a rise in the percent of IAVA members who know a post-9/11 veteran that has died by suicide or attempted suicide. This year is no different. This is a time to redouble our efforts as a nation and answer the call to action. And IAVA will continue to maintain our leadership on that charge.

# 59%

Personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide

# 65%

Personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide

# 77%

Do not believe as a nation we are making progress in combating military/veteran suicide

## Reported suicidal ideation since joining the military:

2018: 43%

2014: 31%



## Reported suicidal ideation prior to joining the military:

Yes: 9%      No: 91%

Yes: 9%      No: 91%

Are you aware of the Veterans Crisis Line, the 24/7 toll-free hotline connecting veterans in crisis with trained responders, which can be reached at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)?

Yes: 95%

4%

Yes: 95%      No: 4%      Unsure: 1%

## Have you ever contacted the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255)?

Yes: 26%

No: 74%

Yes: 26%      No: 74%

# //BURN PITS

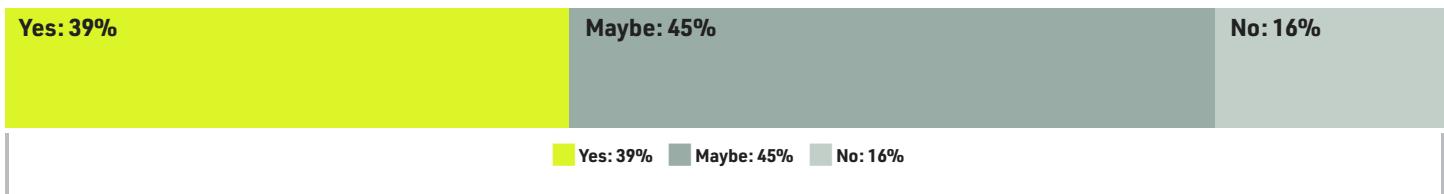


t's known as the Agent Orange of the post-9/11 generation for a reason. Burn pits were a common way to get rid of waste at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly between 2001 and 2010. There are other hazards beyond burn pits that occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan that may pose a danger for respiratory illnesses, including high levels of fine dust and exposure to other airborne hazards. Year after year, we have seen an upward trend in the number of members reporting symptoms associated with burn pits exposure.

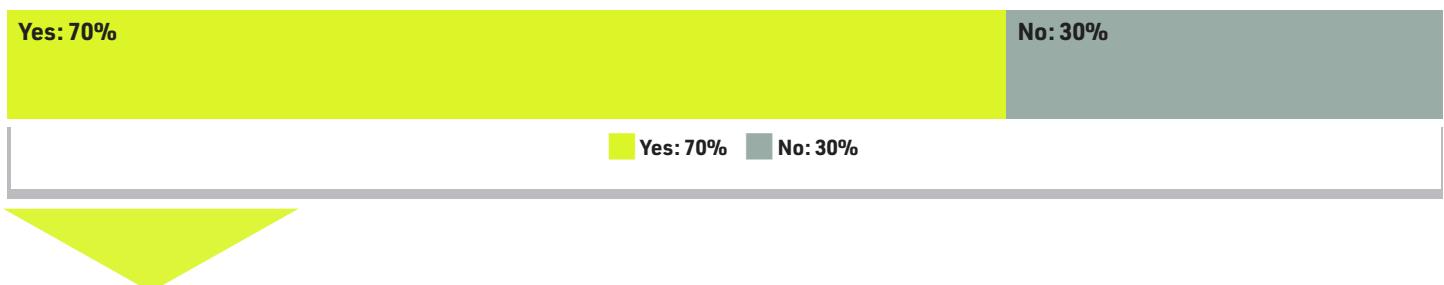
# 82% were exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials.



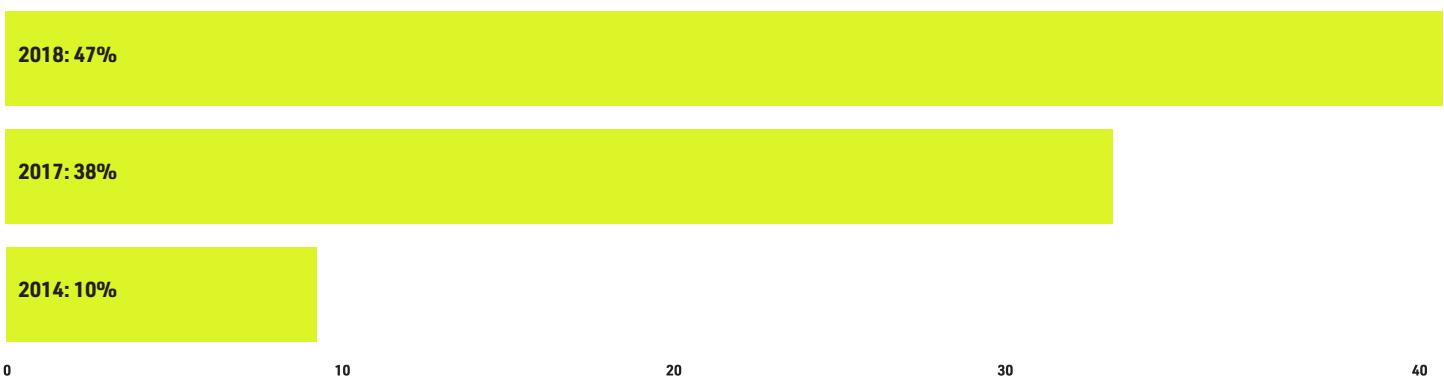
Do you believe that you have symptoms associated with burn pits or toxic exposure, such as respiratory issues?



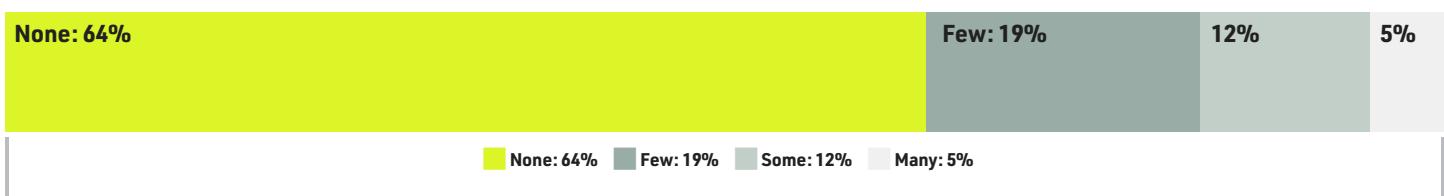
Are you aware of the VA's 'burn pits' registry?



Registered in the VA's 'burn pits' registry:



Did you have any issues when registering with the VA's 'burn pits' registry?



# //WOMEN VETERANS



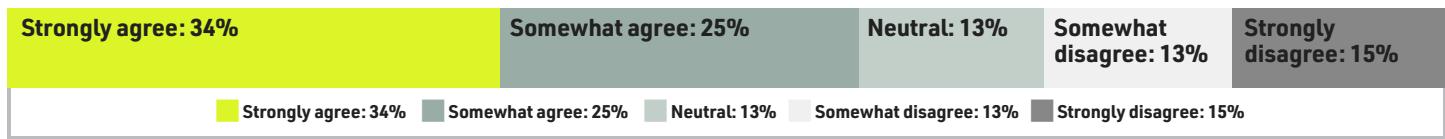
In 2017, IAVA launched our groundbreaking campaign, #SheWhoBorneTheBattle, focused on recognizing the service of women veterans and closing gaps in care provided to them by the VA. We fought hard for top-down culture change in the VA for the more than 345,000 women who have fought in our current wars—and for all Americans. It's a fight that still continues.

## How important do you think it is for IAVA to address issues facing women veterans?

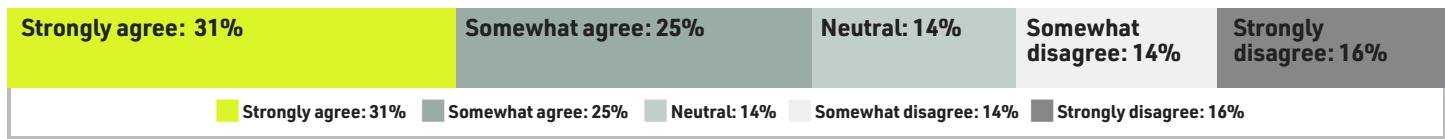


## What is your opinion of the Department of Defense's (DoD) decision that opened combat MOS positions to women?

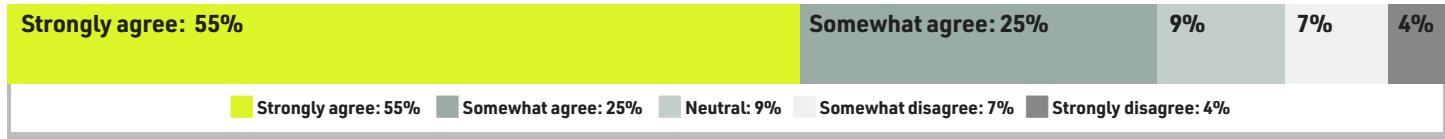
All respondents



Male respondents

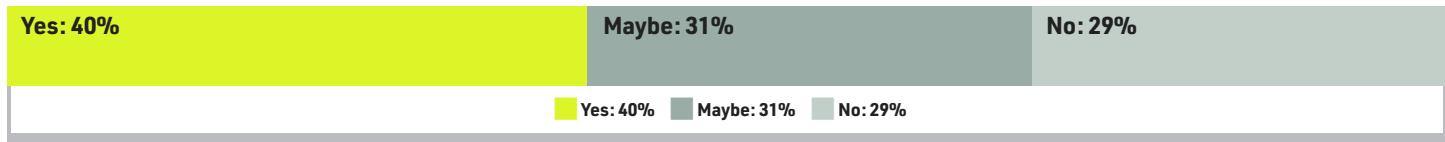


Female respondents

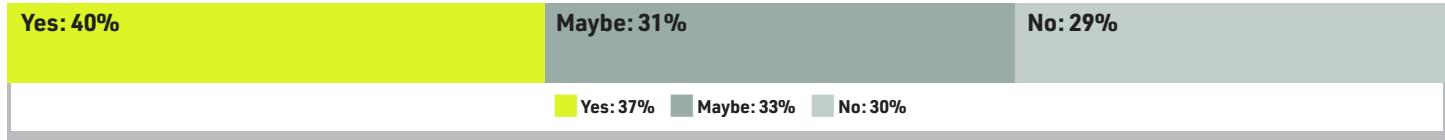


## Do you think women's advancement in the military has been limited by past restrictions on women in combat?

All respondents



Male respondents

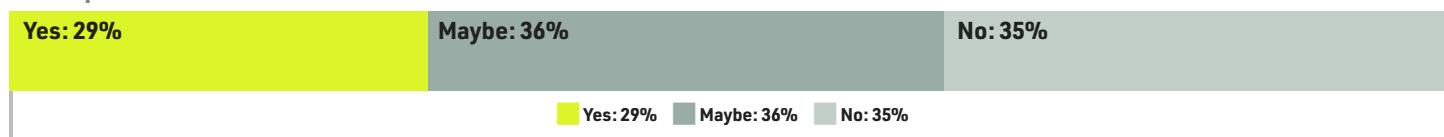


Female respondents

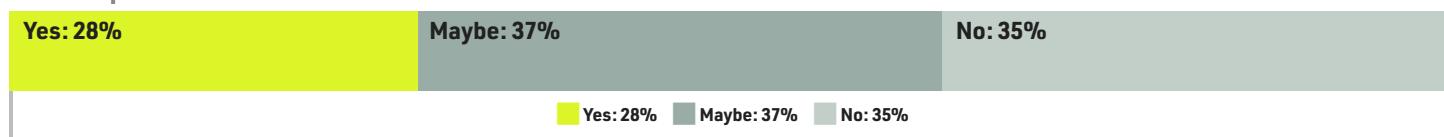


## **Do you believe that lifting restrictions on women in combat has improved the public recognition of their military contributions?**

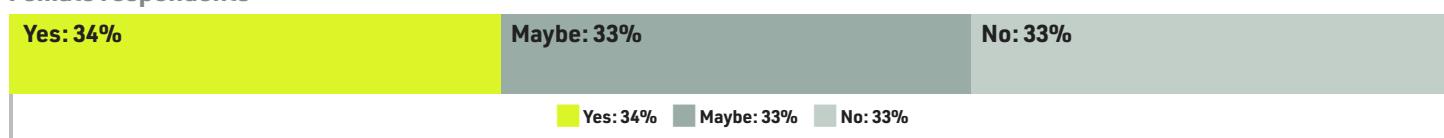
All respondents



Male respondents



Female respondents



## **Report suicidal ideation since joining the military:**



## **Report a service-connected mental health injury:**



## **Report difficulty covering expenses in a typical month:**





## Opinions On Changing the VA's Motto: "To care for him who has borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

Strongly agree the motto should be changed: 28%

Somewhat agree the motto should be changed: 18%

Neither agree nor disagree the motto should be changed: 24%

Somewhat disagree the motto should be changed: 9%

Strongly disagree the motto should be changed: 21%



# //SEXUAL TRAUMA AND ASSAULT



Military sexual trauma affects an estimated 1 in 4 women veterans and 1 in 100 male veterans, according to the VA. While there has been much attention on the issue from Department of Defense and VA, sexual assault continues to plague the services. By better understanding the past experience of these survivors, IAVA can better combat sexual assault in the future.

8%

are a survivor of military sexual assault.

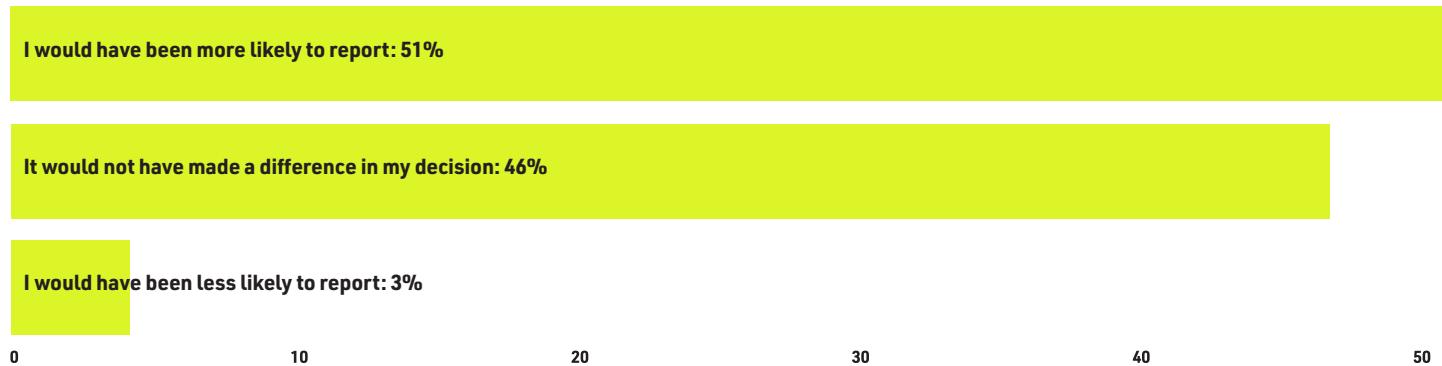
29%

of those assaulted reported it.

66%

experienced any kind of retaliation after reporting.

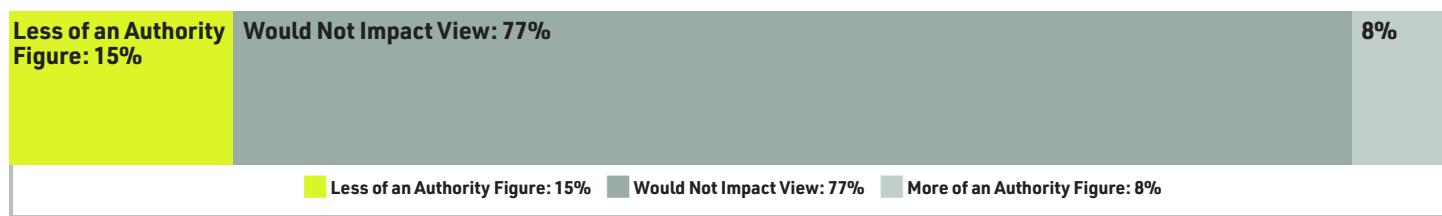
**If instead of your commander, a trained military prosecutor had the authority to make the decision to move forward with your case, would it have impacted your decision to report?**



**61%**

**Do not believe that Department of Defense is effectively addressing the problem of military sexual assault.**

**If the final decision to send someone to court martial for military sexual assault was a trained military prosecutor instead of the commanding officer, would you view the commander as:**



**Top 3 reasons Survivors Did Not Report the Crime:**

1. Did not think anything would be done
2. Concerned about impact on my career
3. Concerned that my peers would treat me differently

# //RATING VA HEALTH CARE



**P**roblems have plagued VA for quite some time. While there has been much progress legislatively and administratively to ease access to care for veterans at VA, we often hear from IAVA members that their experiences are vastly different. Creating a standardized system of care across all VAs is the ultimate goal, and every year we hear IAVA members ask for VA reform as a top priority.

**44%**

support the expansion of privatizing care at VA.

**81%**

are enrolled in VA health care.

**81%**

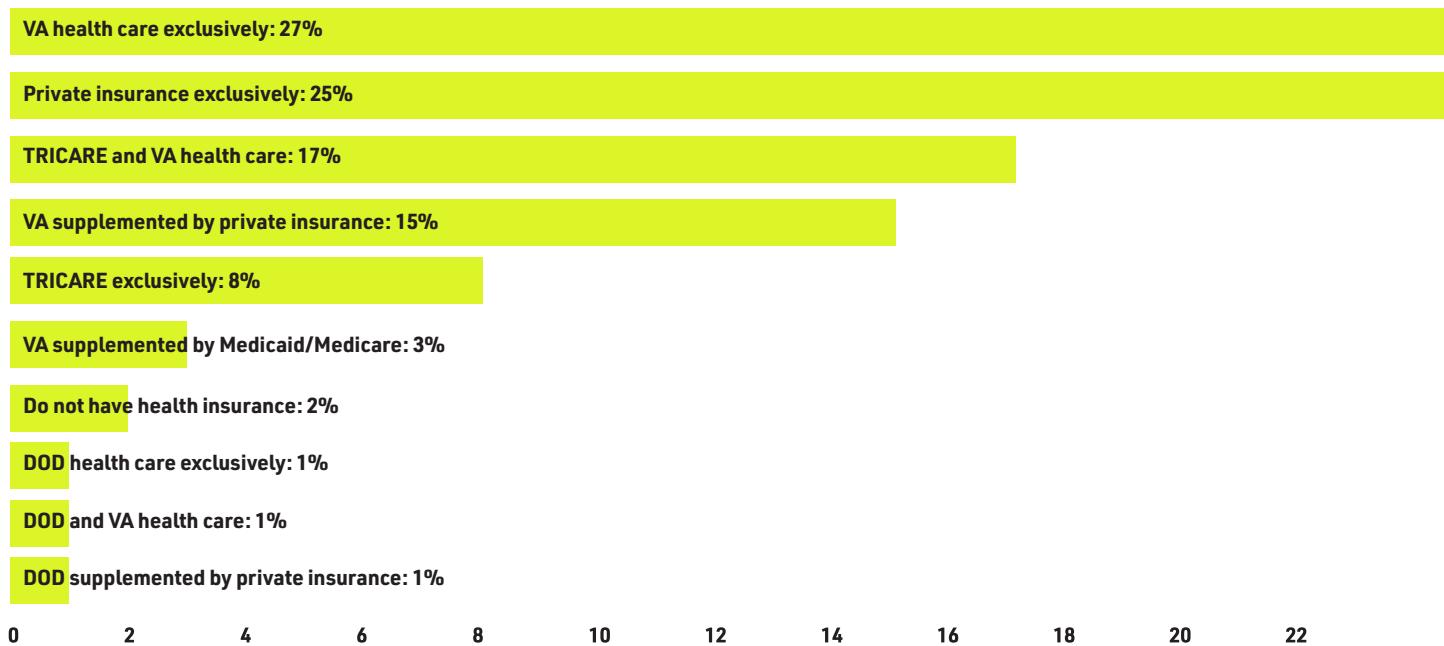
rate VA care as average or above average.

#### Top 3 reforms needed to address improvements to VA health care:

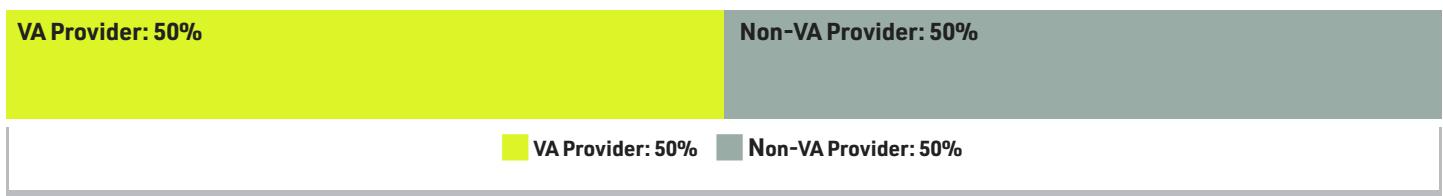
1. Reduce paperwork and bureaucracy to access care
2. Reform hiring and firing practices to improve accountability
3. Consolidate Community Care programs

**68%** are receiving VA benefits other than health care.

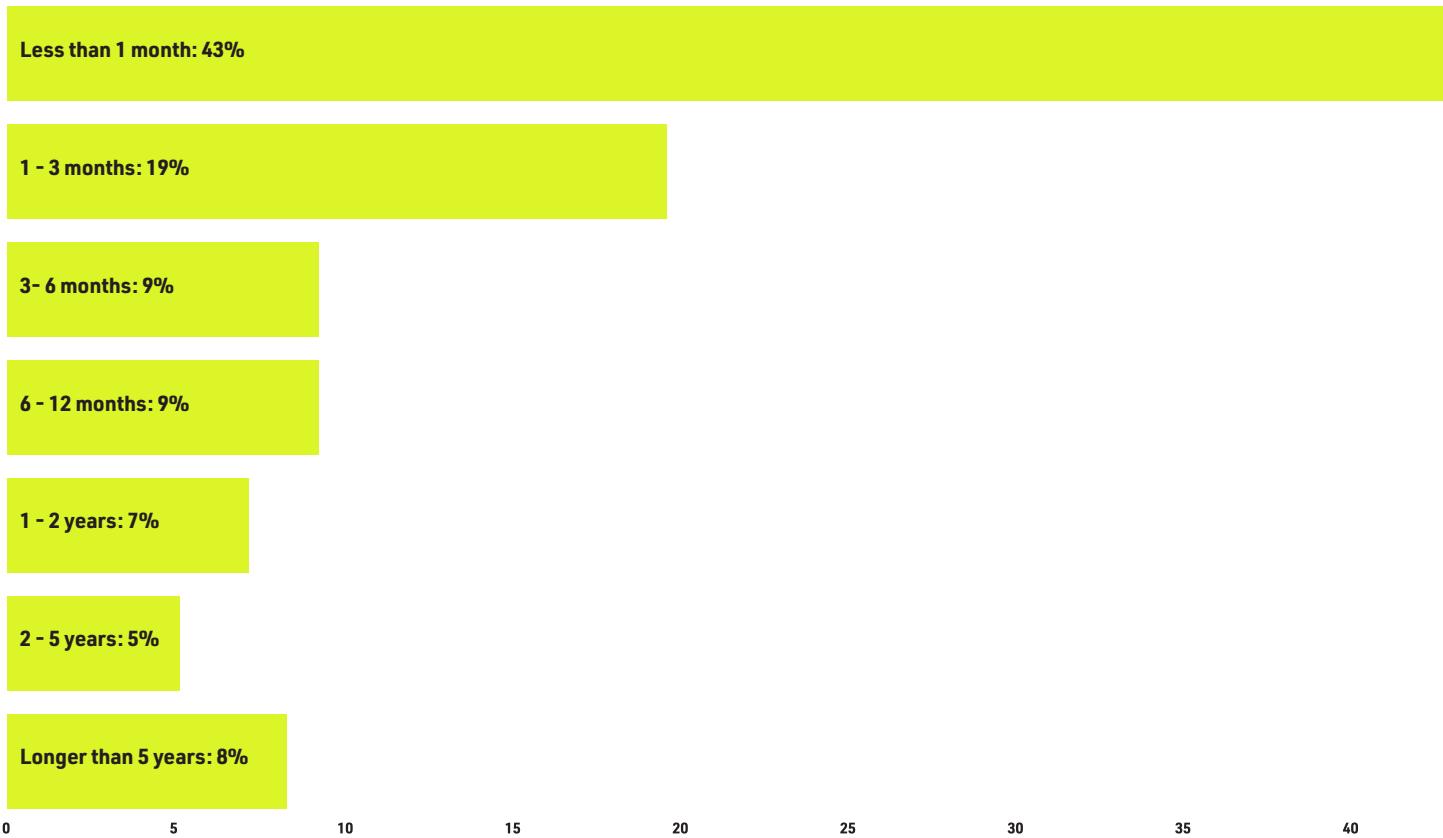
#### Health Care Sources:



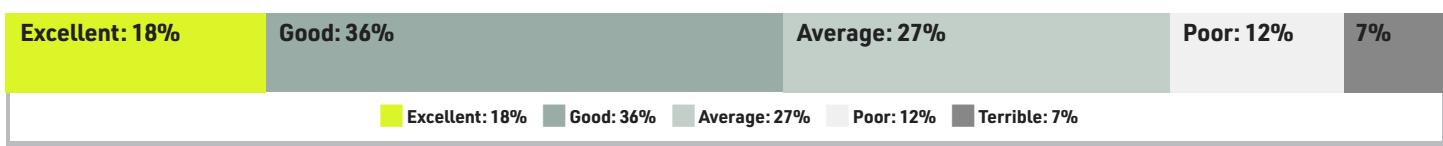
## Who is your primary source of care?



## When was the last time you sought health care from the VA?



## Rate your overall experience with VA health care:



## Top 3 Reasons Not Enrolled in VA Health Care:

1. Have other health benefits
2. Other veterans need the benefits more
3. Prefer private sector provider

## Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

### Clinicians provide quality care to veterans:

Rate your overall experience with VA health care:



### Non-VA clinicians



### Clinicians understand the medical needs of veterans:

#### VA clinicians



#### Non-VA clinicians



## Rate your level of satisfaction with the following providers:

### VA primary care provider



### VA specialty care



### VA mental health provider



## Top 3 Reasons to Use Non-VA Provider as Primary Source of Care:

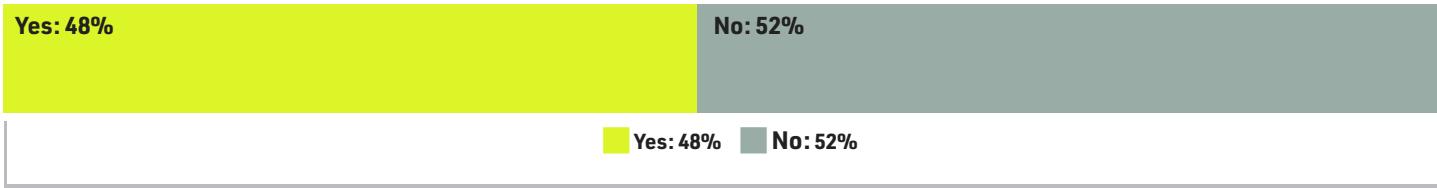
1. Convenience
2. Higher quality of care
3. Not enrolled in VA health care

## Top 3 Reasons to Use VA Provider as Primary Source of Care:

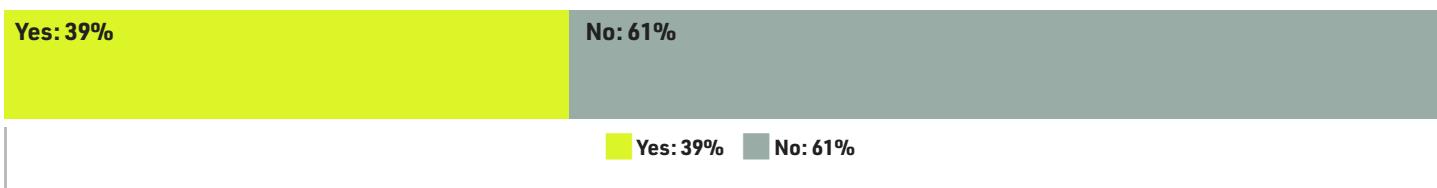
1. Health care is free
2. My only source of health care
3. Provider understands military service



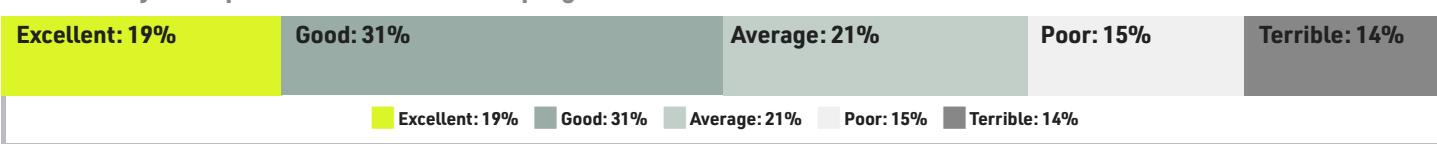
## Are you familiar with the VA Choice Card Program?



## Have you used the VA Choice Card Program?



## Please rate your experience with the Choice program



84%

Have not heard of the VA MISSION Act and the changes it will make to the VA system.

# //RATING VA BENEFITS



While many think of health care when it comes to VA, many veterans and their families rely on VA for earned benefits such as pensions and disability compensation. The process to access these earned benefits can be daunting and leave many veterans waiting months or longer for a decision. While progress has been made to update the system, long wait times and a lagging technology system continue to plague veterans waiting on their earned benefits.

## Do you have a service-connected disability rating from VA?

Yes: 75%

No: 25%

Yes: 75% No: 25%

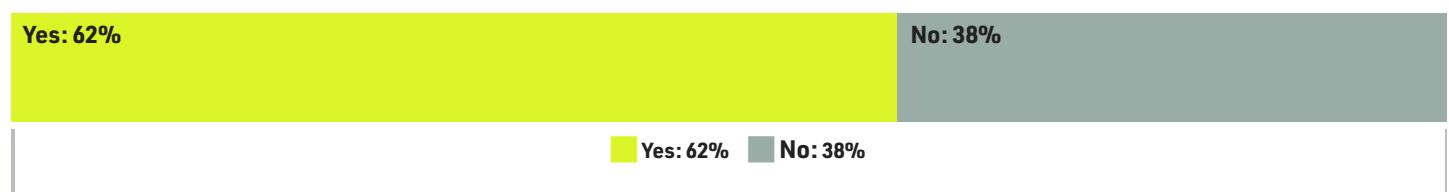
## How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?



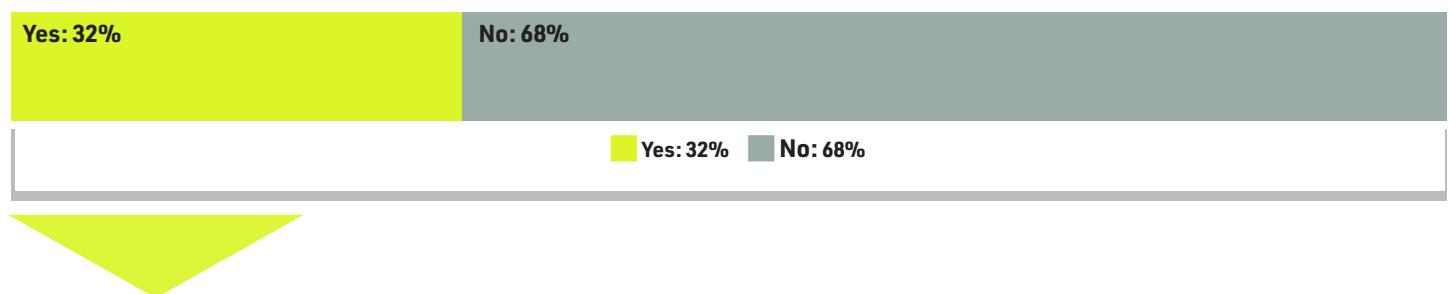
## For those still waiting, length of pending claim:



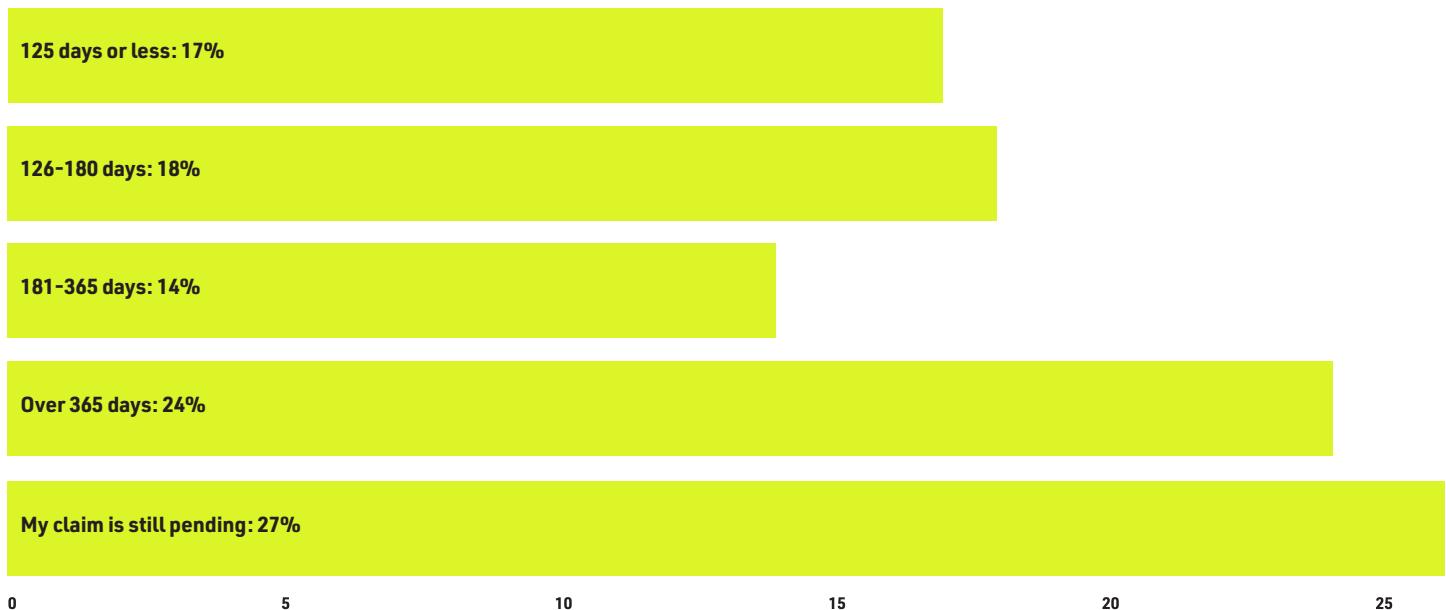
## Were you satisfied with the outcome of your claim?



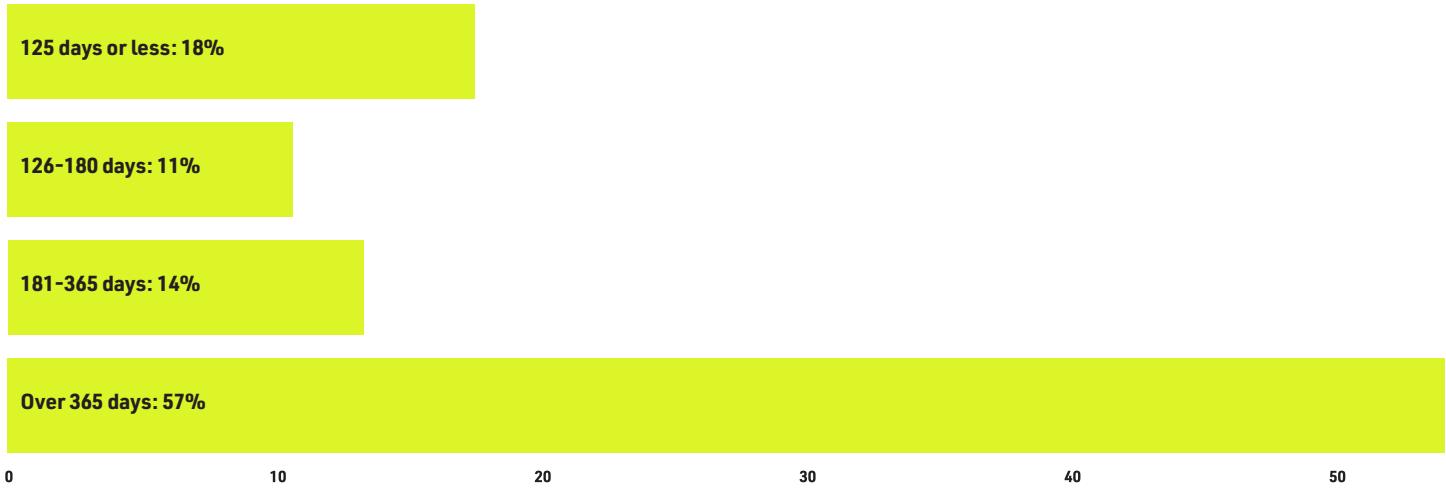
## Have you ever appealed a VA disability compensation claim decision?



## How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?

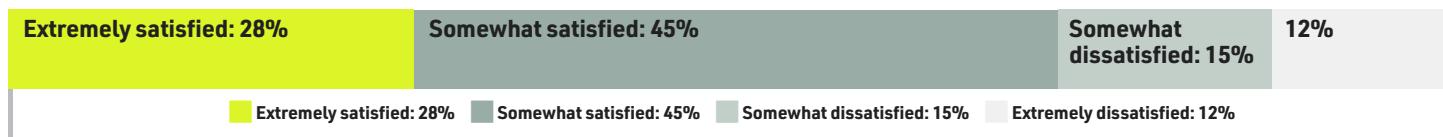


## How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?

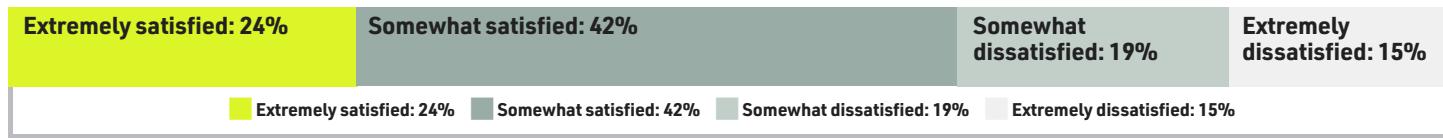


## Please rate your satisfaction with the following VA benefits:

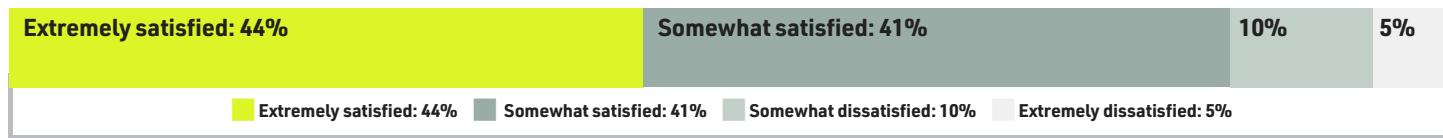
### Disability compensation



### Pension

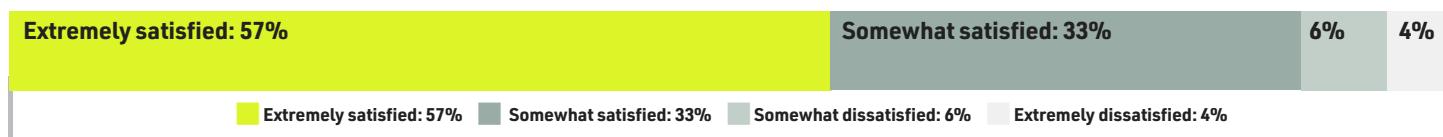


### GI Bill/Education Benefits\*

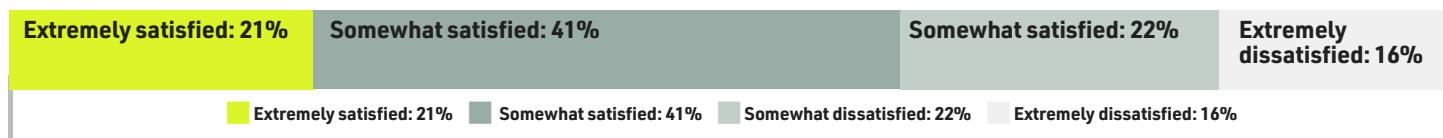


\* Responses collected over time frame of VA GI Bill payment scandal around Veterans Day 2018.

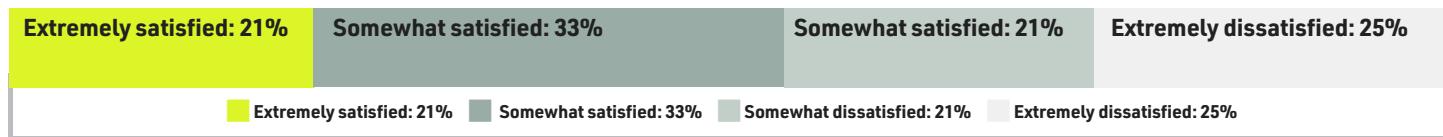
### Home loans



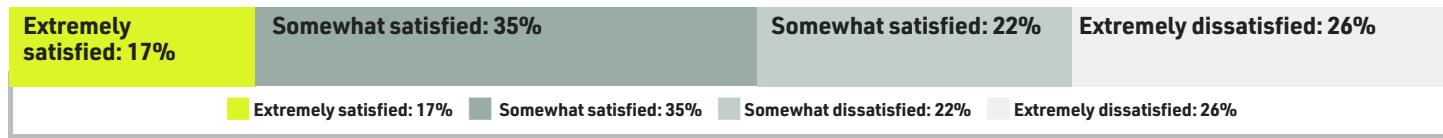
### Insurance



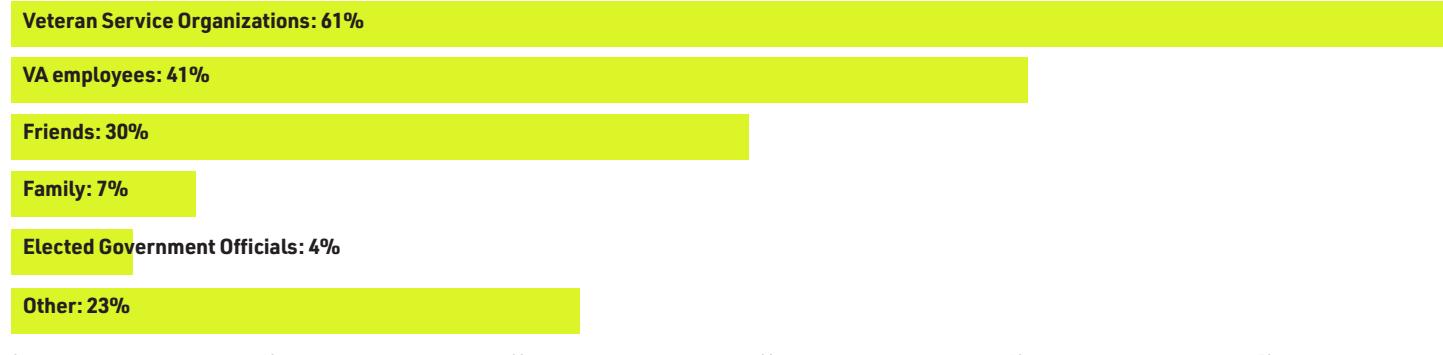
### Vocational rehabilitation/employment services



### VA Caregiver Benefits



## When you have questions about VA benefits, who do you ask?



# //GI BILL AND EDUCATION



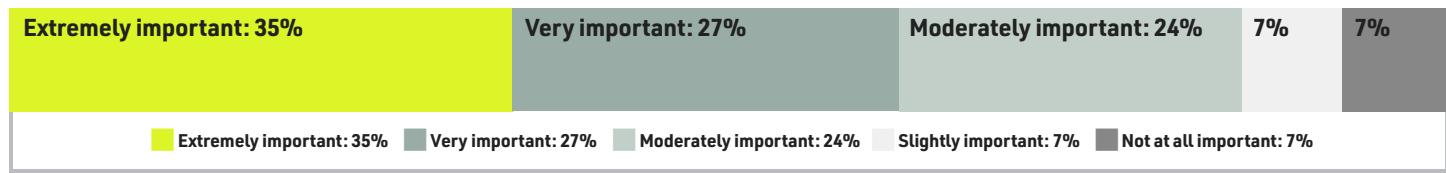
**O**ne essential earned benefit is the GI Bill. The post-9/11 GI Bill was a landmark victory in 2008. Since then, almost 2 million veterans and their dependents have used the GI Bill to go to school. While constantly under attack to strip this essential benefit, the Post-9/11 GI Bill sets up the next generation of veterans and their families for success and continues to be a powerful recruitment and retention tool.

## How important is the post-9/11 GI Bill for the following:

### Military recruitment



### Military retention



### Successful transition/reintegration of veterans into civilian life



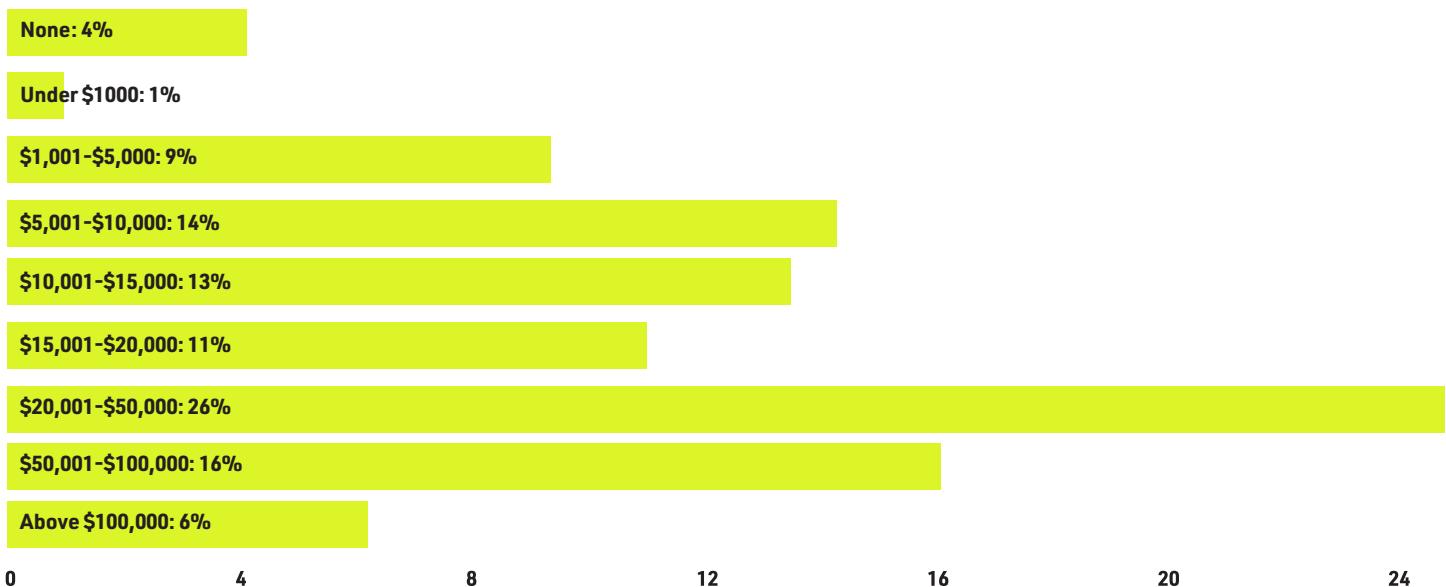
41%

took out loans for school.

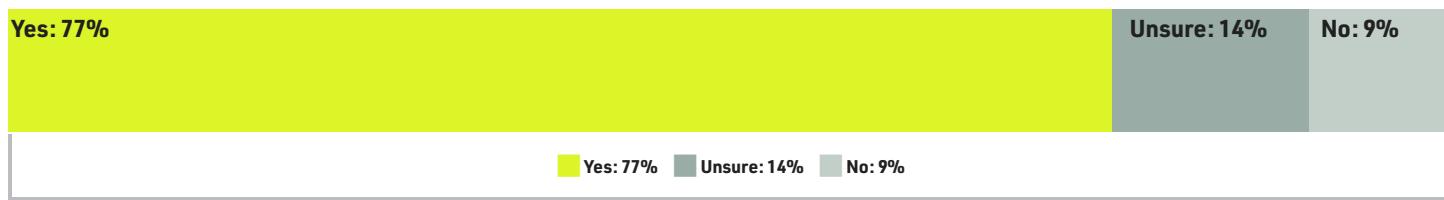
23%

went to for profit school.

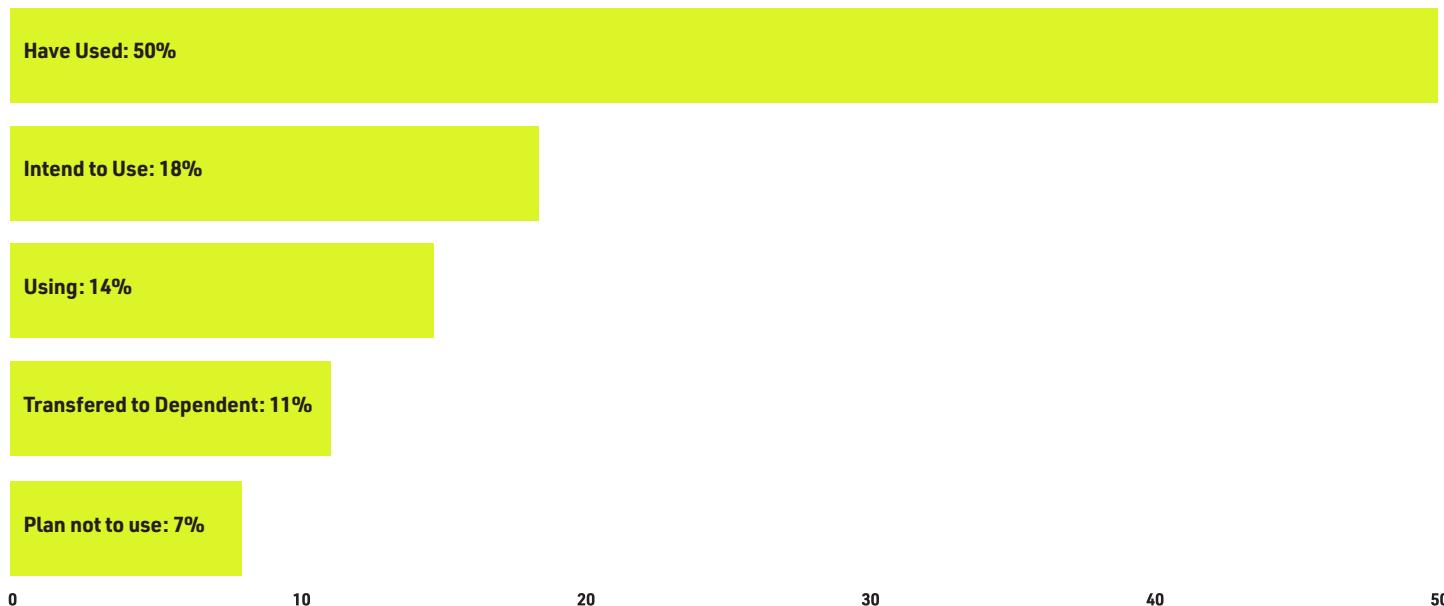
### Amount of Student Loan Debt



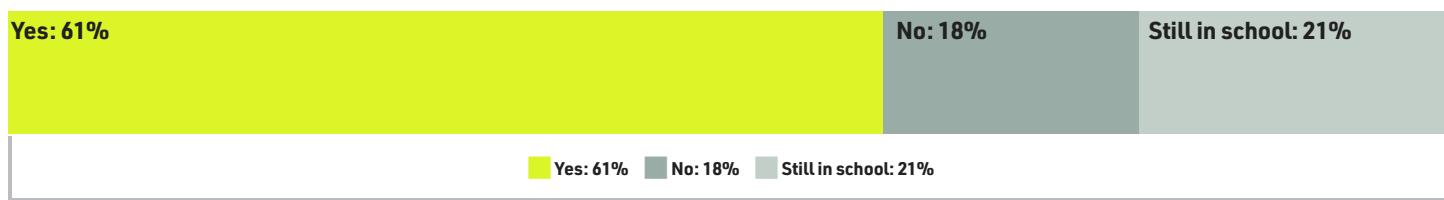
## Are you eligible for the post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)?



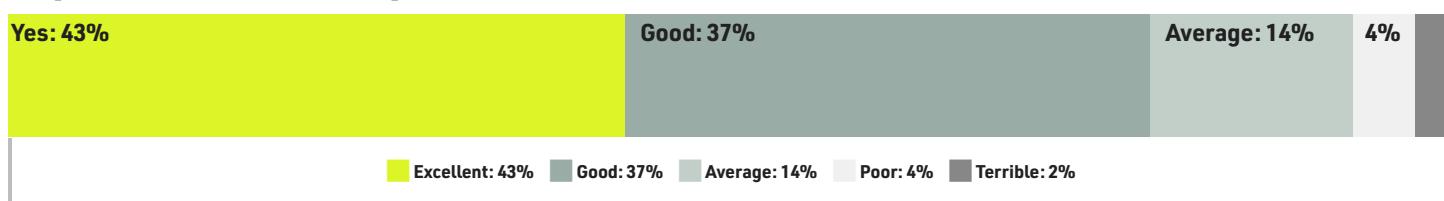
## Have you or one of your dependents ever used the post-9/11 GI Bill?



## While in school on the post-9/11 GI Bill, did you (or your dependent) graduate?



## Overall, how would you rate your experience or your dependent's experience with the post-9/11 GI Bill?

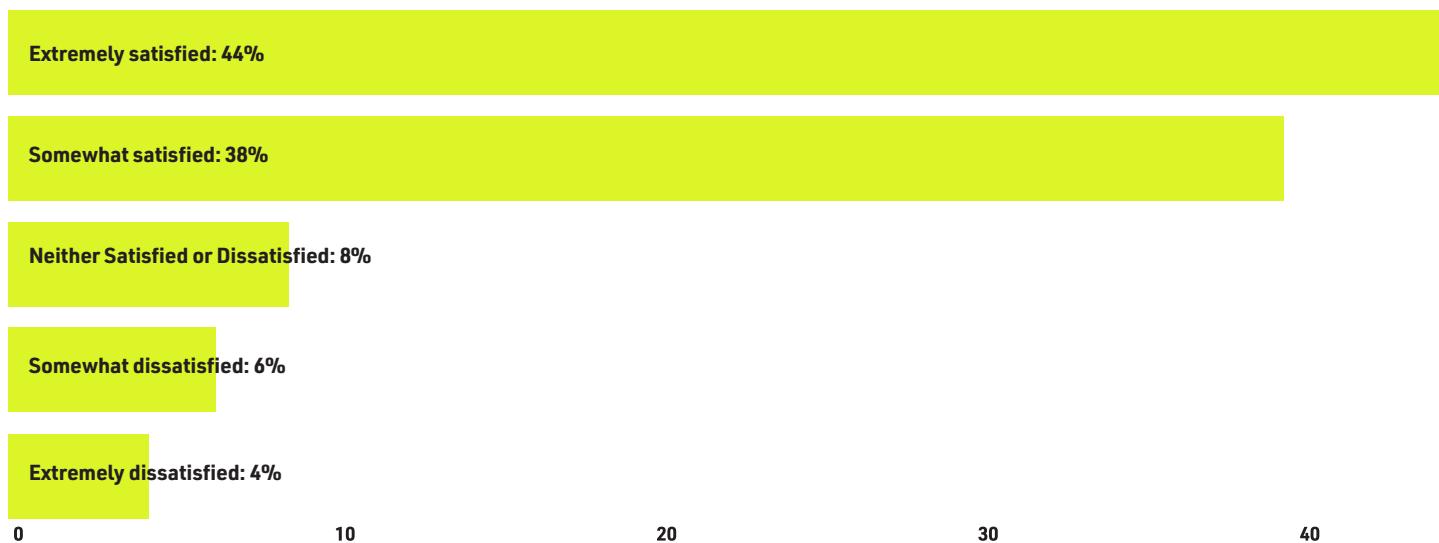


**60%** Of respondents have pursued a degree since separating from the military

**17%** Of respondents are currently in school

**73%** Have already finished degree.

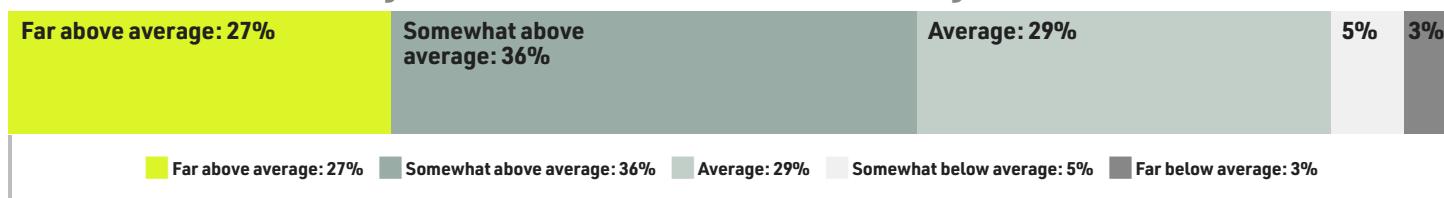
## Overall level of satisfaction with your educational program(s):



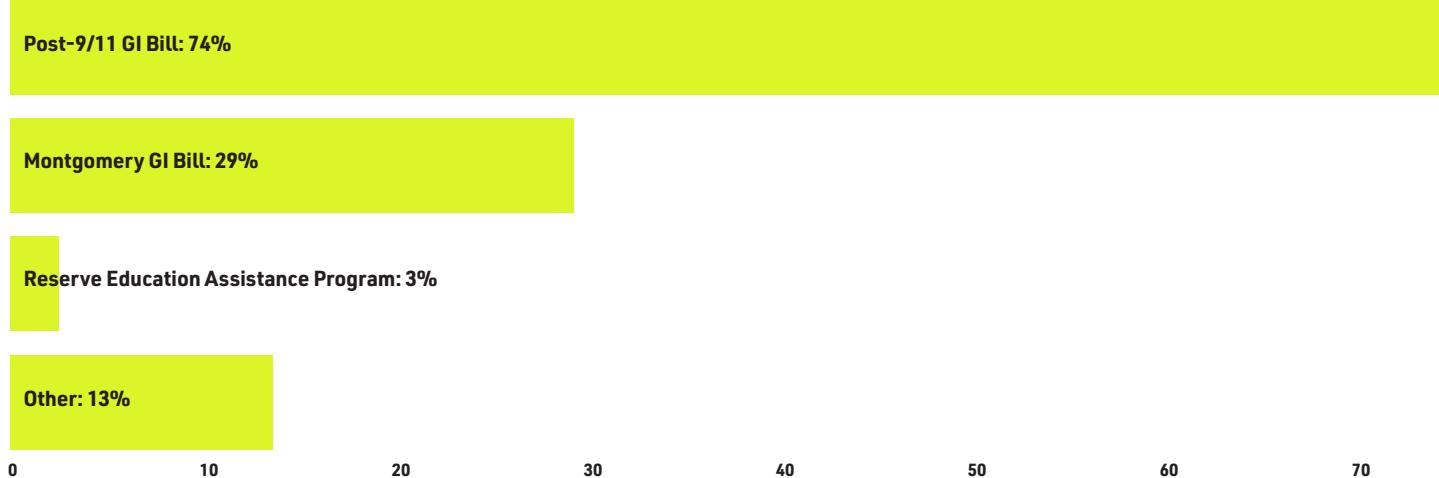
## Top 5 Reasons Chose Institution:

1. Acceptance of GI Bill benefits
2. Location in relation to my home
3. Offering of specific program/field of study
4. Veteran-friendly institution
5. Institution's academic reputation/availability of online courses

## To what level is/are your school(s) veteran friendly?



## VA Benefit Used for Education:



# //CANNABIS



Veterans consistently and passionately have communicated that cannabis offers effective help in tackling some of the most pressing injuries they face when returning from war. Our nation is rapidly moving toward legalizing cannabis, and 33 states now permit medical cannabis. Across party lines, medical cannabis is largely unopposed. Yet our national policies are outdated, research is lacking, and stigma persists.

**83%** agree Cannabis should be legal for medicinal purposes.

**55%** agree Cannabis should be legal for recreational purposes.

## Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

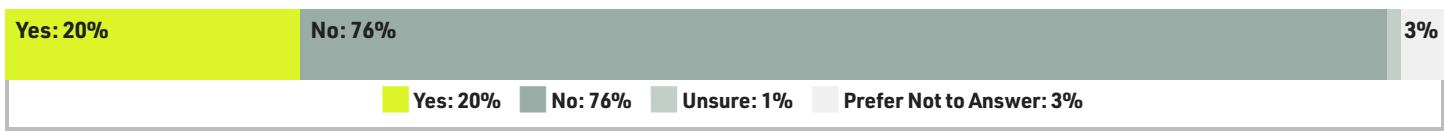
Cannabis should be researched for medicinal uses



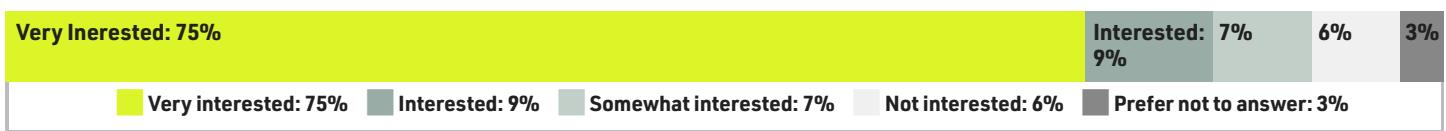
The VA should allow for research into cannabis as a treatment option



## Have you ever used cannabis or other cannabinoid products for medicinal use?



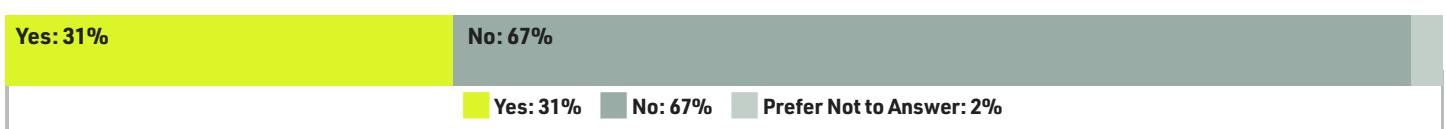
## Would you be interested in using cannabis or cannabinoid products as a treatment option if it were available to you?



## Comfort Discussing Medical Cannabis with Doctors:



## Discussed Medical Cannabis with Doctor

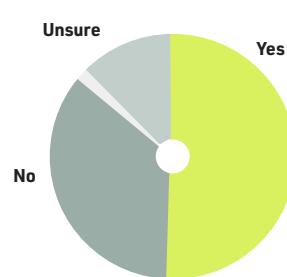


### Ever used cannabis recreationally?\*



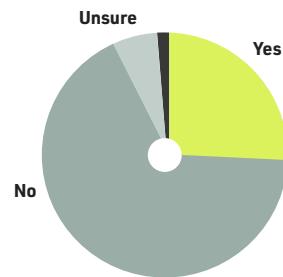
- Yes: 66%
- No: 20%
- Unsure: 1%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 13%

### Do you live in state where medical cannabis is legal?



- Yes: 52%
- No: 35%
- Unsure: 12%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 1%

### Do you live in a state where recreational cannabis is legal?



- Yes: 26%
- No: 67%
- Unsure: 6%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 1%

\* Of those that have used cannabis medicinally

# //TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL

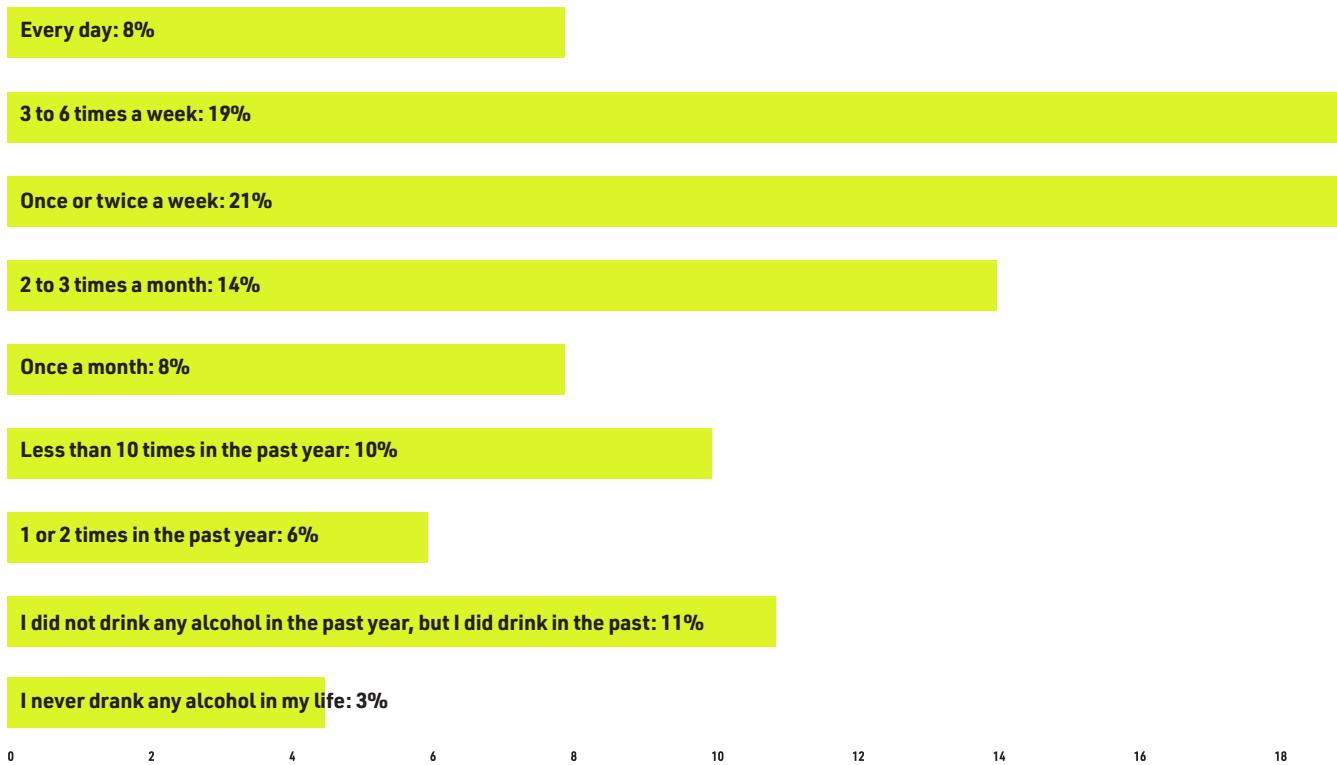


**W**hile substance use on its own is not alone harmful in the case of legal substances, substance abuse and long-term daily use can have a myriad of harmful health effects from physical to mental health impacts.

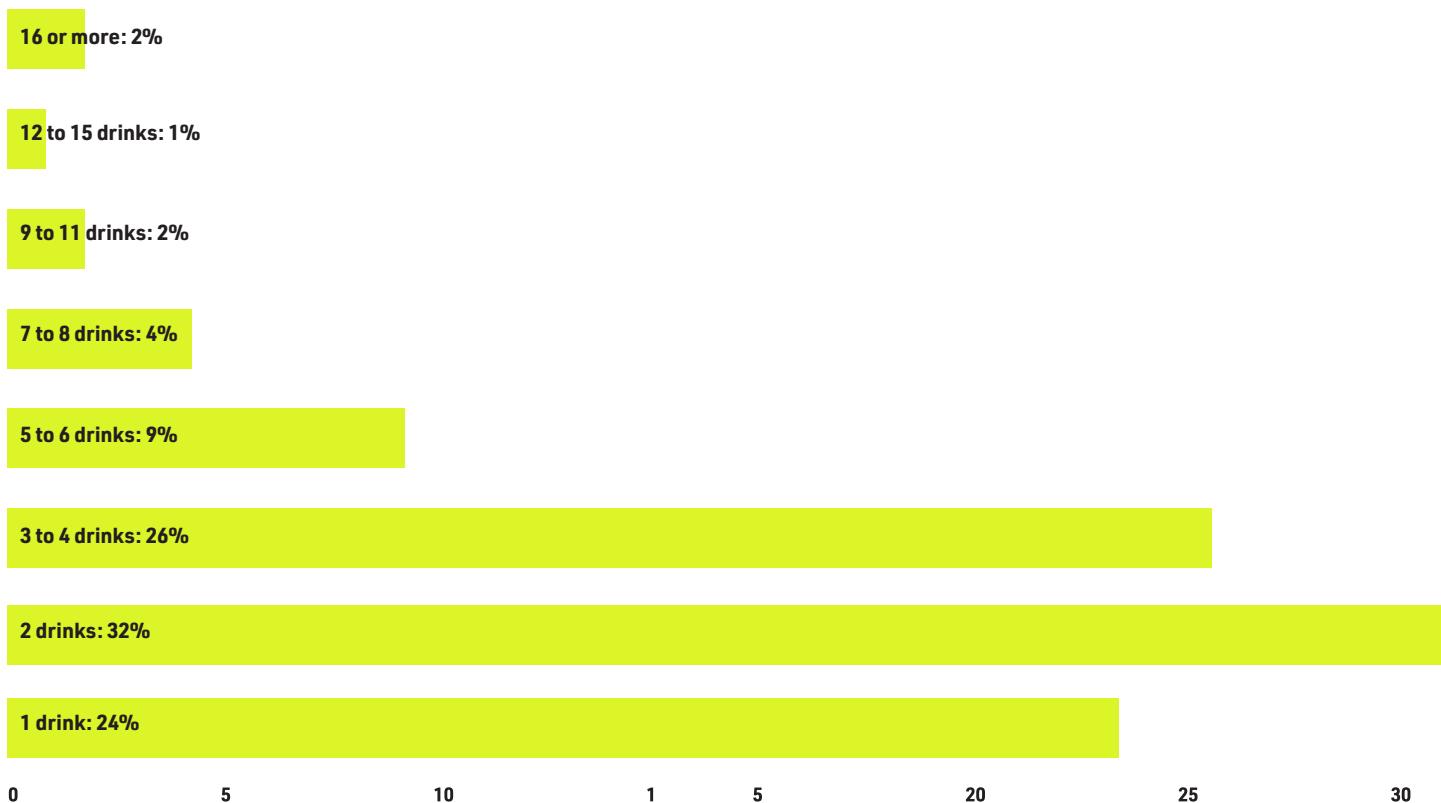
**27%**

**reported alcohol use in line with binge drinking at least one day in the past month.**

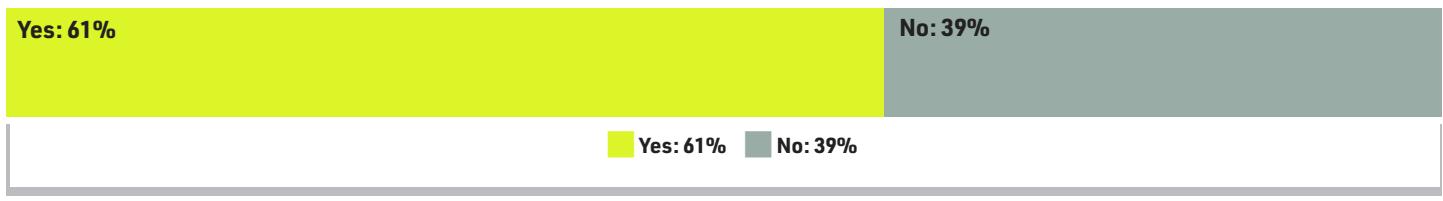
## During the last 12 months, how often did you usually have any kind of drink containing alcohol?



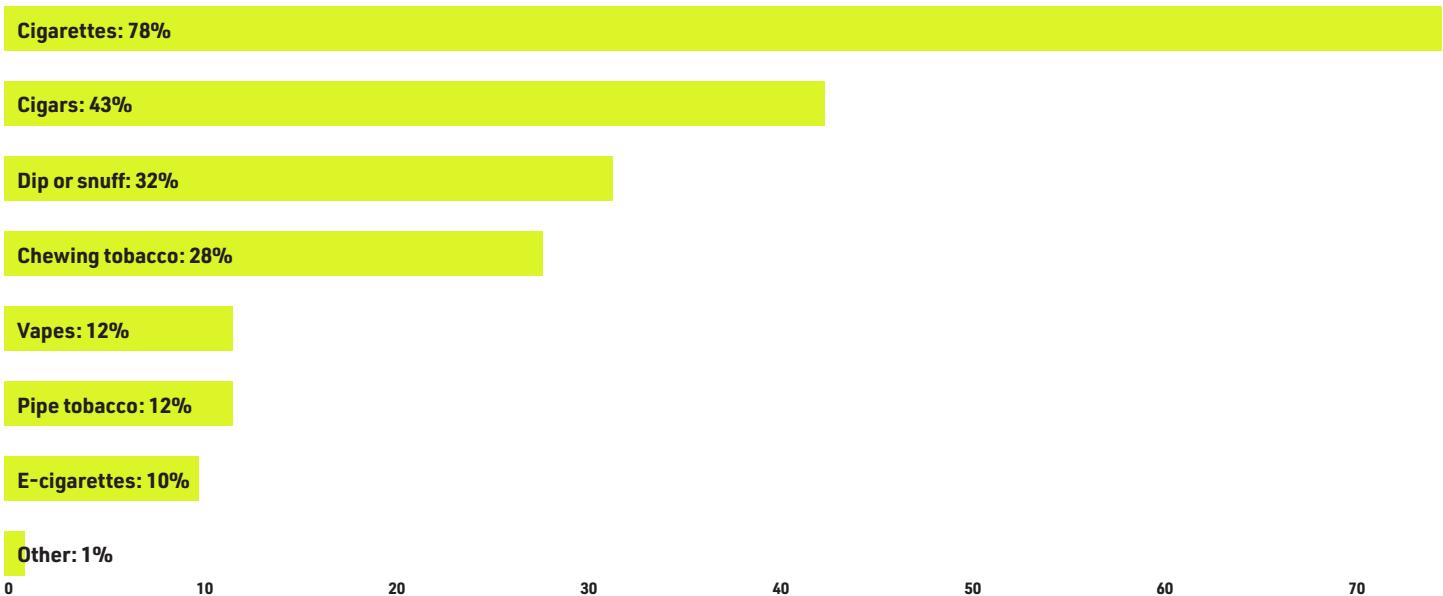
## Typical Number of Drinks Consumed during One Day of Alcohol Consumption:



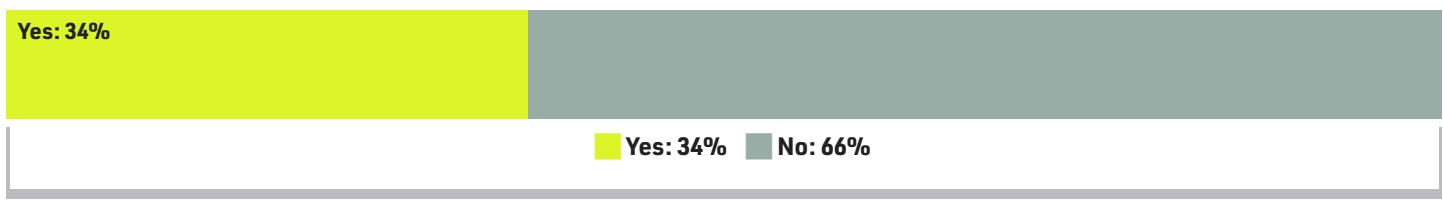
## Have you ever used tobacco products?



## What form of tobacco products have you used?



## Do you currently use tobacco products?



## How often do you use tobacco products?



# //FIREARM OWNERSHIP



**I**t's a powerful and often politicized topic in today's environment, but firearm ownership and storage is a particularly important topic in the veteran community. Veterans are more likely than their civilian counterparts to own and know how to use a firearm for various reasons. And sadly, about 70 percent of veterans that die by suicide use a firearm as the method. Firearm safety and storage is a continuing topic of conversation in the veteran community, and IAVA members are an important part of that conversation.

**68%**

Of respondents  
own personal  
firearms

Please select your primary method of storage for your firearm:

Locked, Unloaded, Ammunition Stored Separately: 30%

Locked and Loaded: 20%

Would Rather Not Say: 20%

Unlocked, Unloaded, Ammunition Stored Separately: 13%

Unlocked, Loaded: 10%

Locked, Unloaded, No Ammunition in Home: 2%

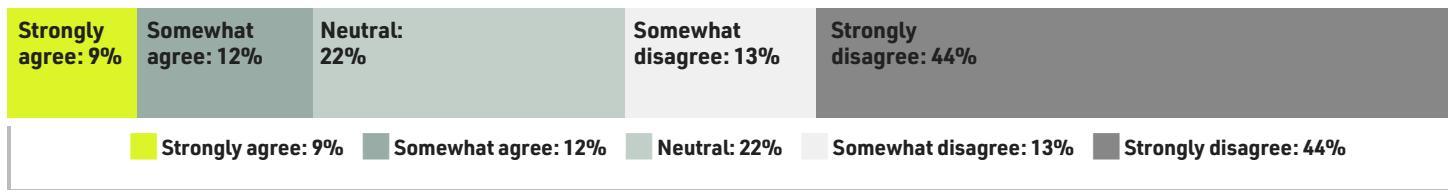
Unlocked, Unloaded, No Ammunition in Home: 1%

Other: 4%

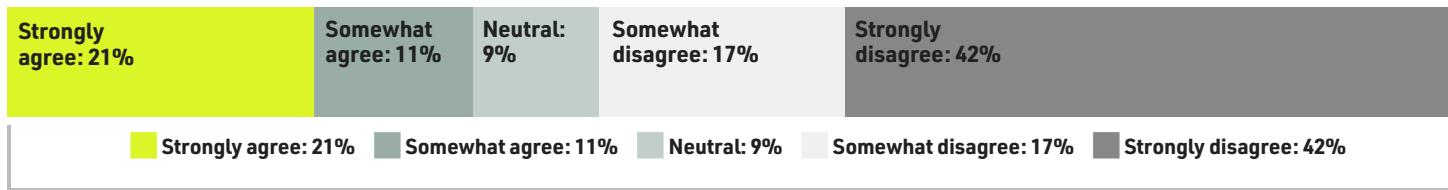
0 5 10 15 20 25 30

## Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

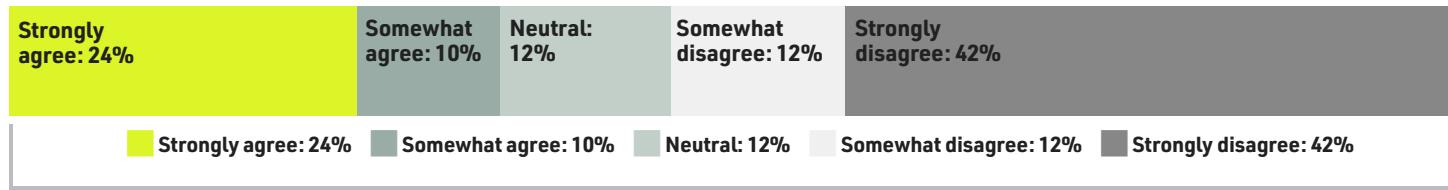
Establishment of community lockers as a means to safely store weapons outside of the home.



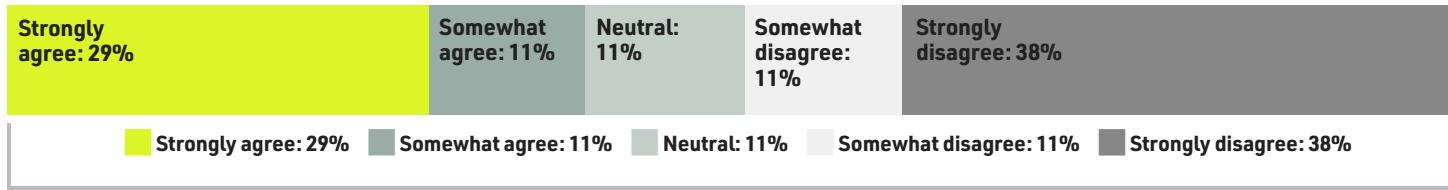
Allowing concealed carry without a permit



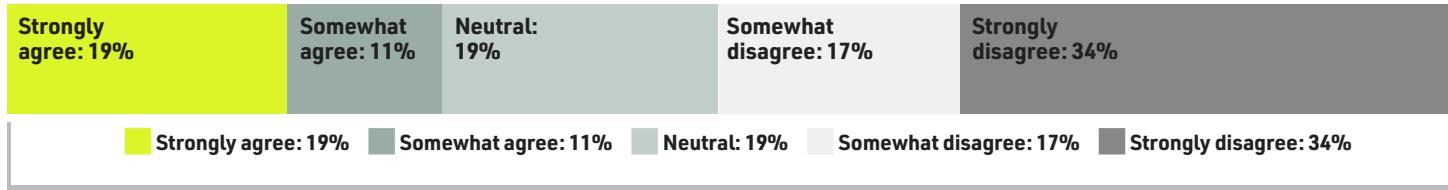
Banning assault-style firearms



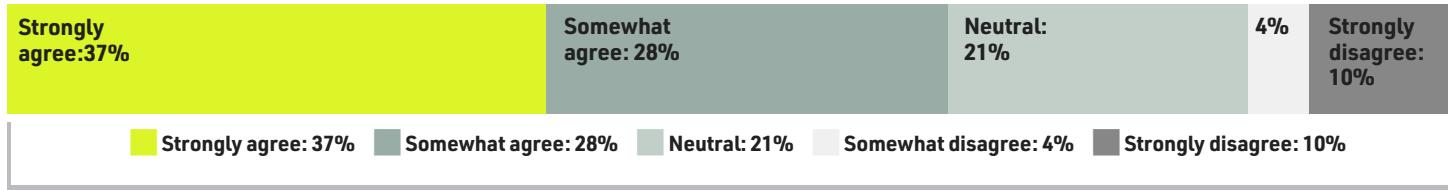
Banning high-capacity magazines



Shortening waiting periods for buying firearms legally



Distribution of trigger locks at medical centers, sporting good/gun stores and community centers.



Universal background checks for individuals purchasing firearms



# //MENTAL HEALTH



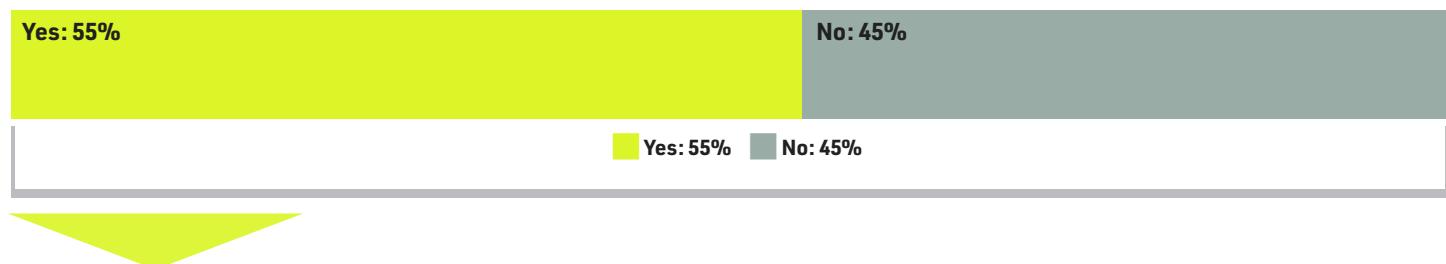
**M**ental health injuries impact the post-9/11 generation at an alarming rate. Among IAVA members, mental health injuries like PTSD, anxiety and depression are higher than even VA reported numbers for the post-9/11 generation. Ensuring access to effective treatment options for mental health injuries is paramount to the long term health of post-9/11 veterans.

**84%** Believe that the military/veteran community are not getting the care they need for mental health injuries.

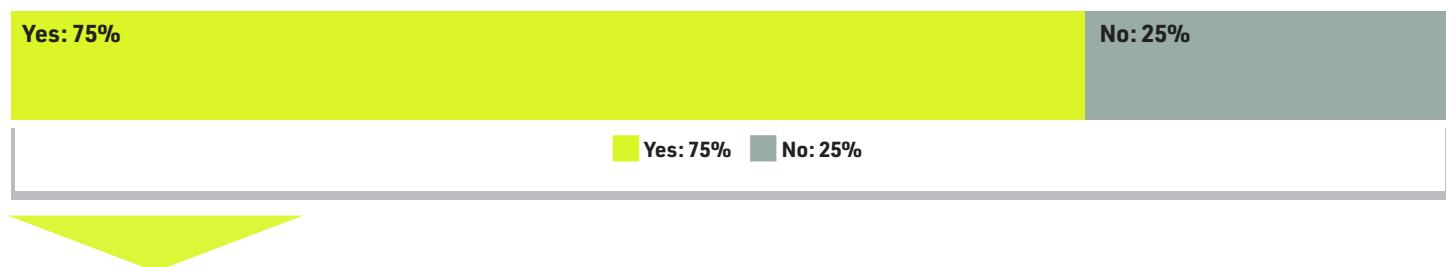
## Top 3 Reasons the military/veteran community not getting the mental health care they need

1. Stigma of seeking help is too great
2. Access to care but not quality care
3. Access but not seeking care

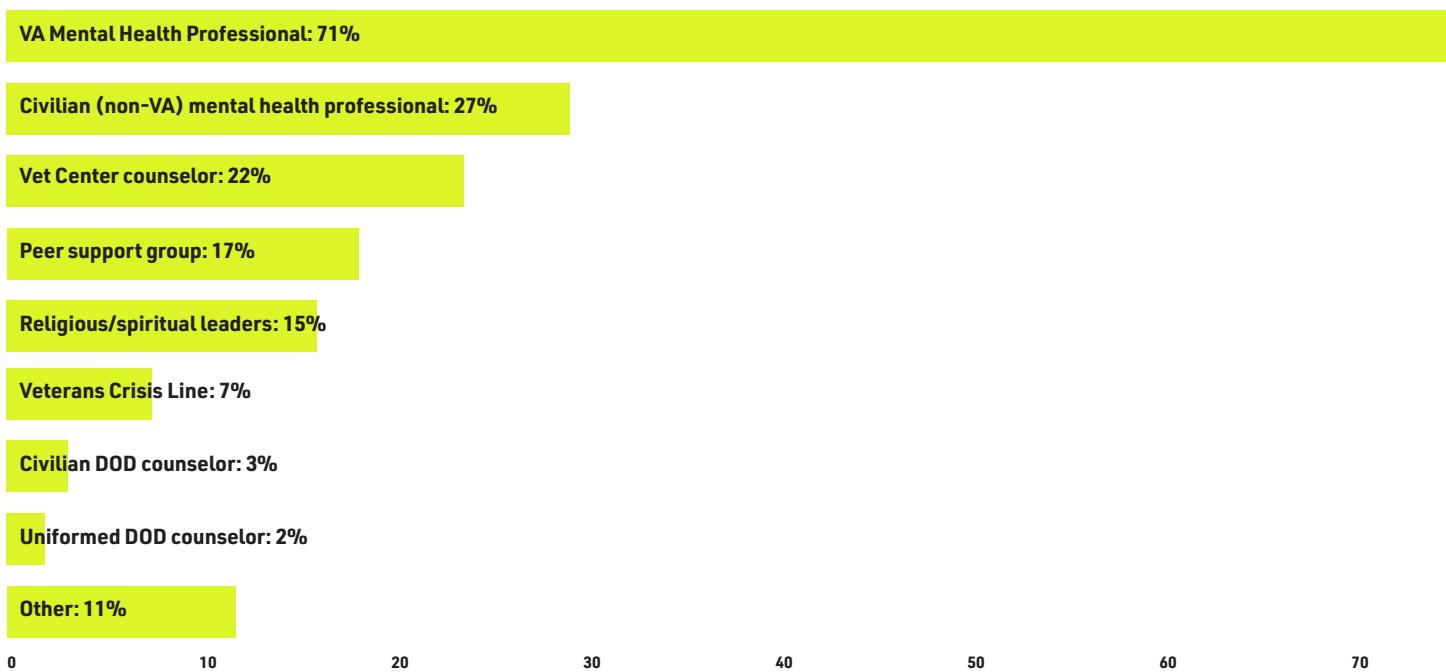
### Do you have a service-connected mental health injury?



### Are you seeking care for your service-connected mental health



### Where are you seeking care?

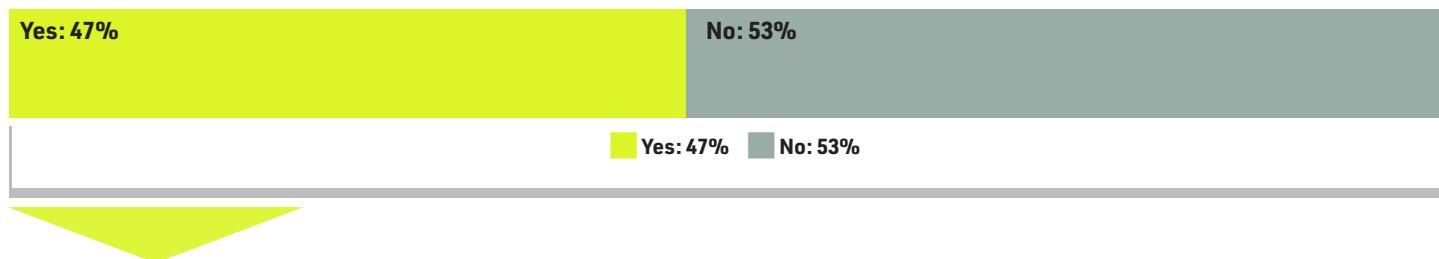




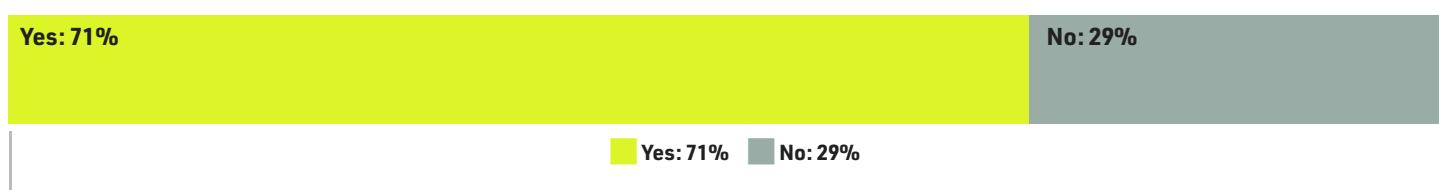
#### Top 3 Reasons for Not Seeking Care:

1. No mental health professional that understands my needs
2. Started treatment but decided to stop
3. Concerned it might affect my career

#### Has anyone close to you suggested you seek care for a mental health injury?



#### Have you sought help as a result of someone close to you suggesting you seek care for a mental health injury?

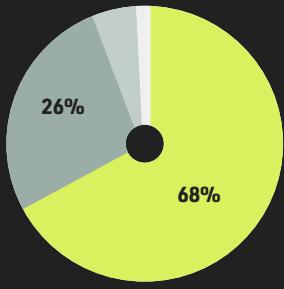


# //GENERAL HEALTH



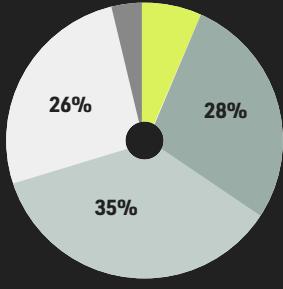
Over 50,000 service members have been wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan according to Department of Defense. However, many service members came home from war only to develop wounds of war after transitioning. Continuing issues such as chronic pain, hearing loss, and mental health injuries are of great concern for the post-9/11 generation. IAVA members know this well.

## How would you rate your health before joining the military?



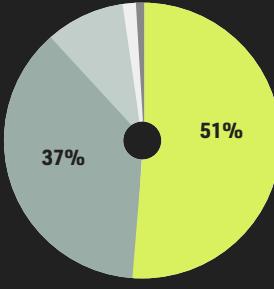
- Excellent: 68%
- Good: 26%
- Average: 5%
- Poor: 1%
- Terrible: 0.1%

## How do you rate your current overall health?



- Excellent: 7%
- Good: 28%
- Average: 35%
- Poor: 26%
- Terrible: 4%

## How important is maintaining your health to you?

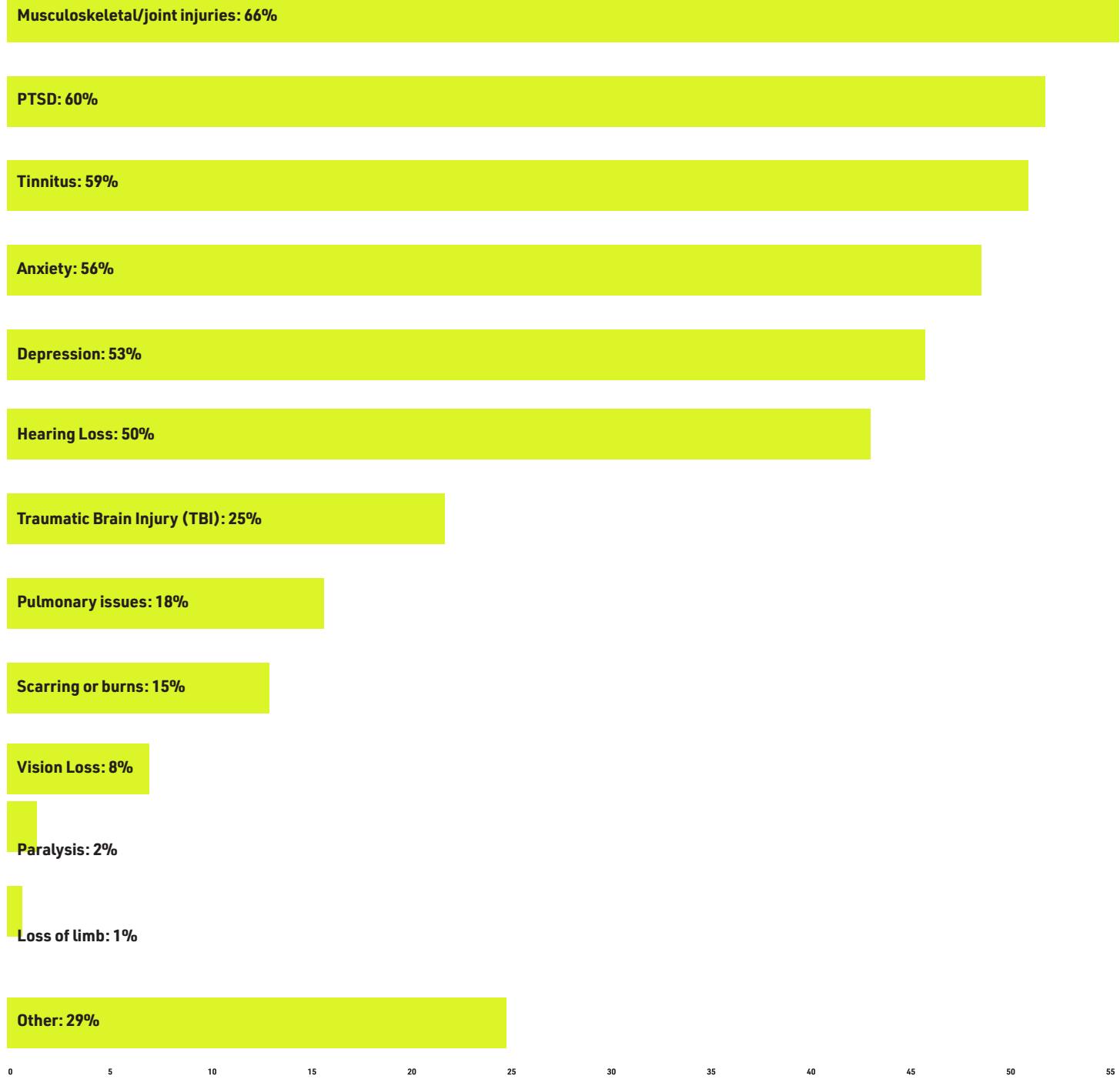


- Extremely important: 51%
- Very important: 37%
- Moderately important: 10%
- Slightly important: 1%
- Not at all important: 1%

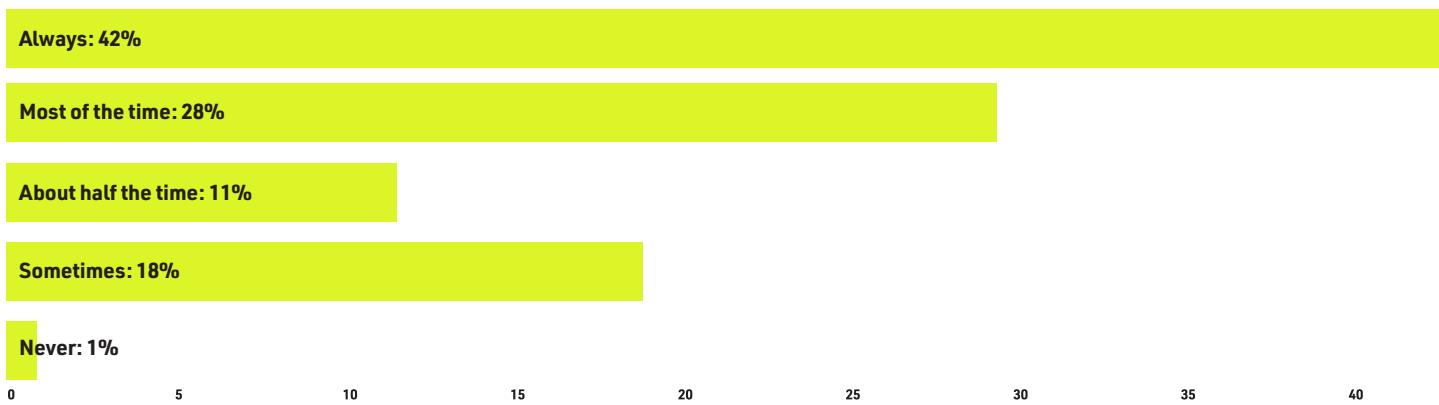
**86%** have experienced a service-connected injury or illness.

**72%** suffer from chronic pain due to a service-connected injury.

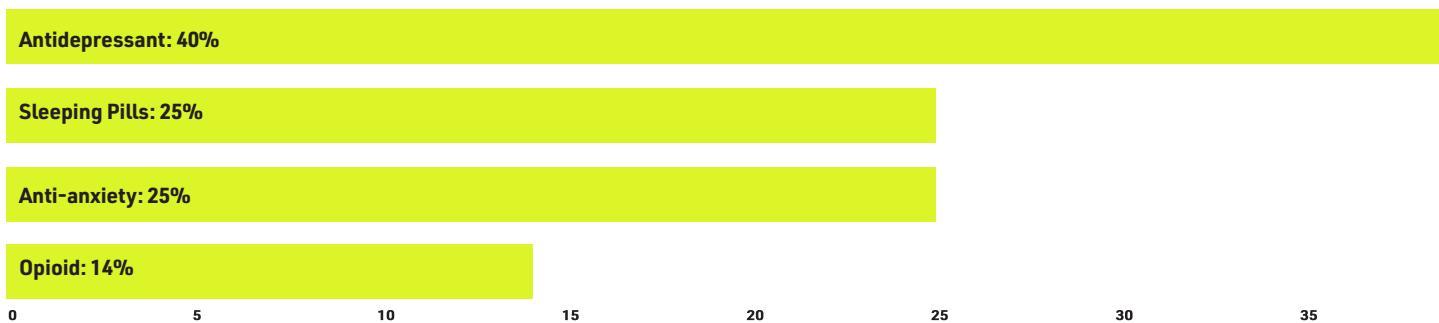
## Service Related Injuries:



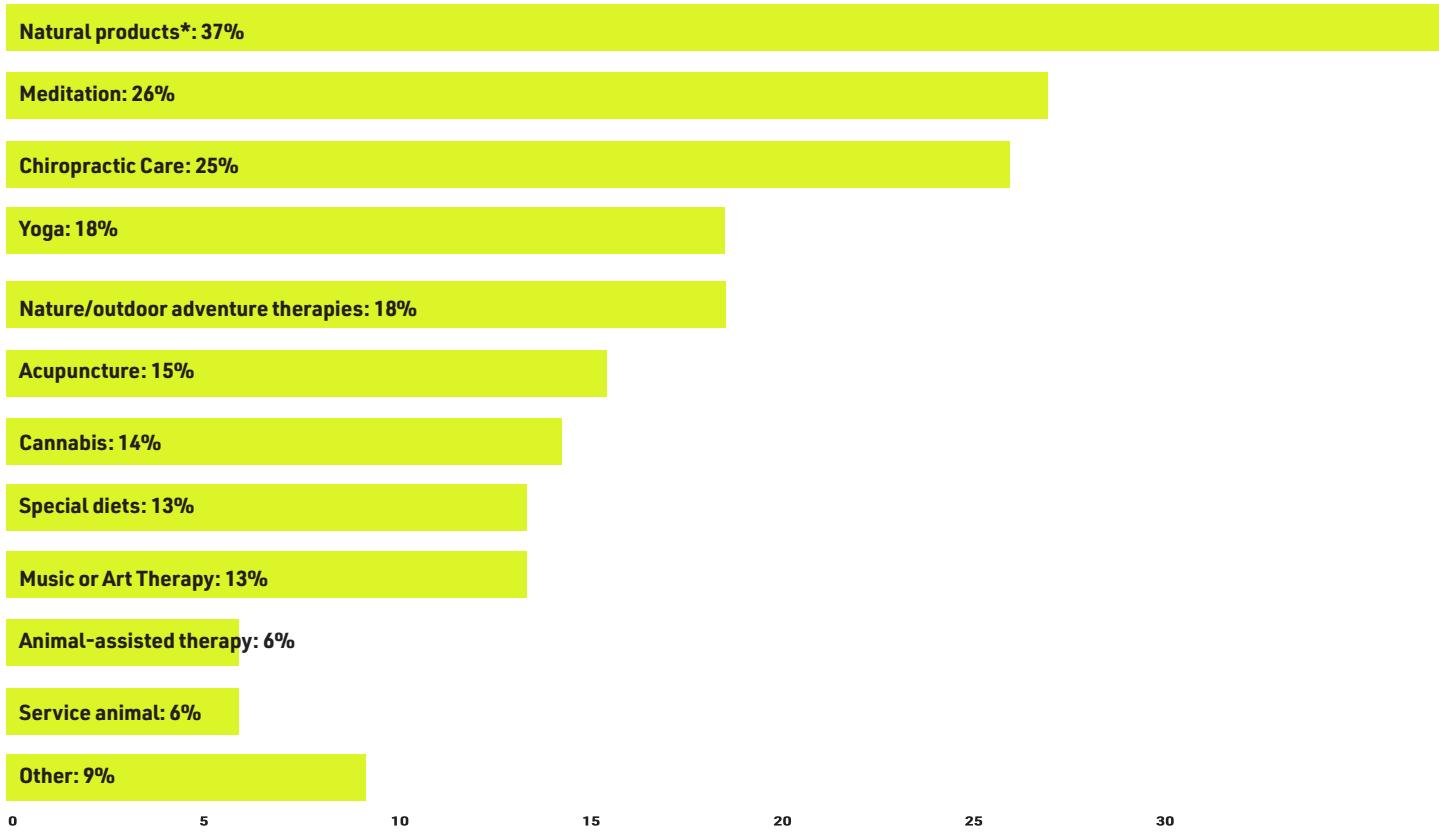
## How often do your service-connected injuries affect your daily life?



## Have you been prescribed and are you taking any of the following drugs for a service-related injury?

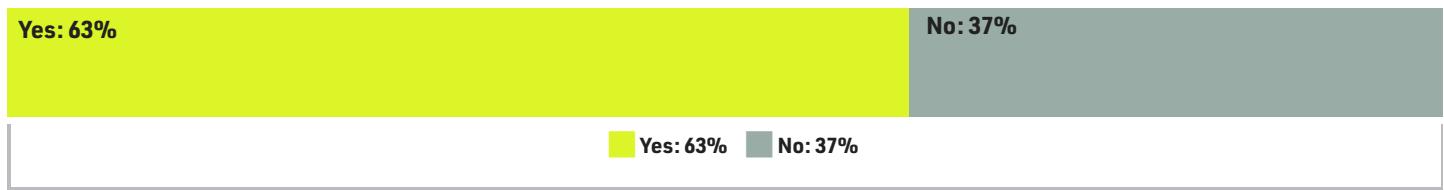


## Alternative Therapies Used in Care Regimen:

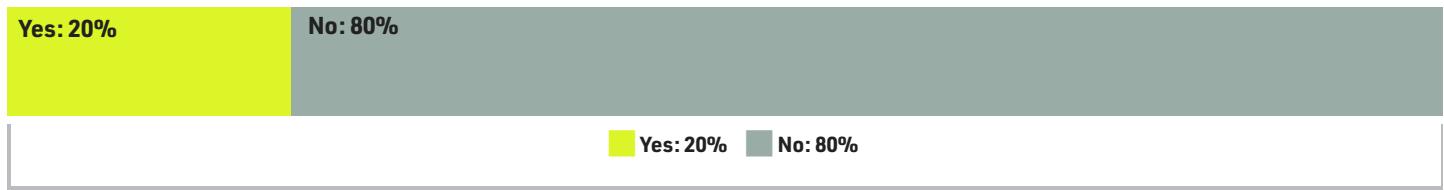


\*i.e. dietary supplements, vitamins, probiotics

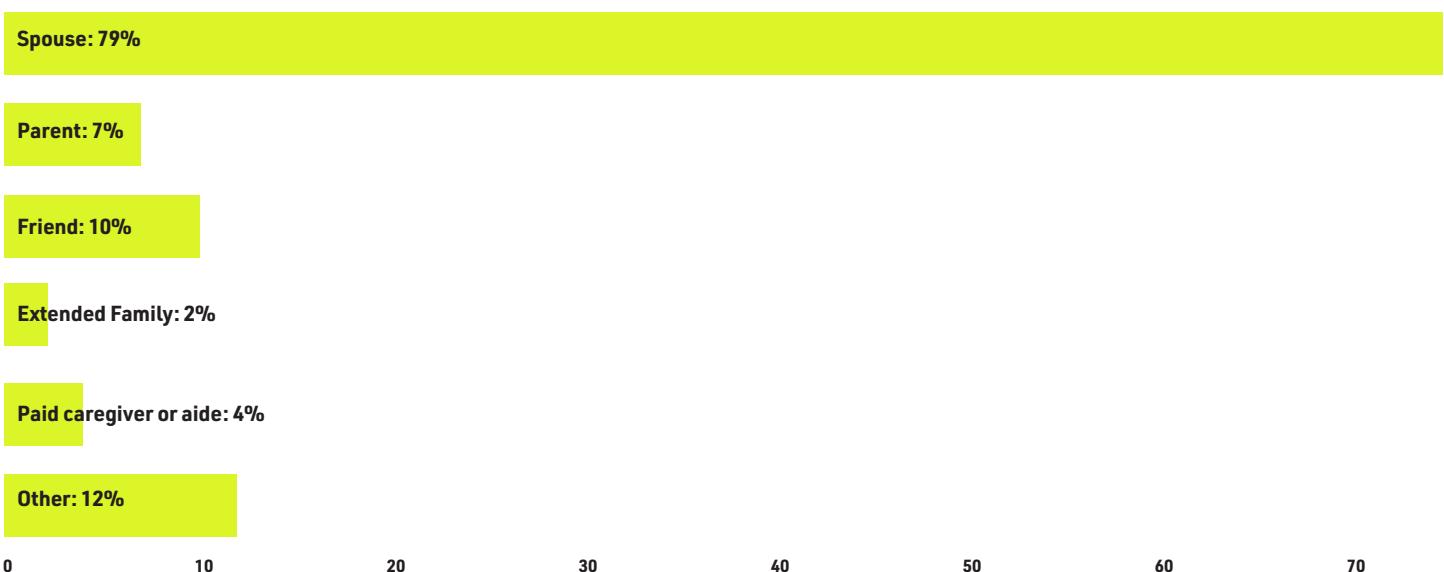
## Do you use any of these alternative therapies to treat an injury you received as a result of your service?



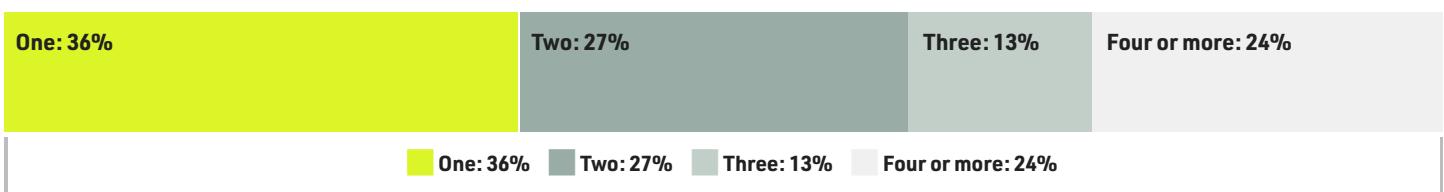
## Do you currently have someone assisting you with some aspect of your daily health needs?



### Is that person:



## How many daily activities do you need assistance with?

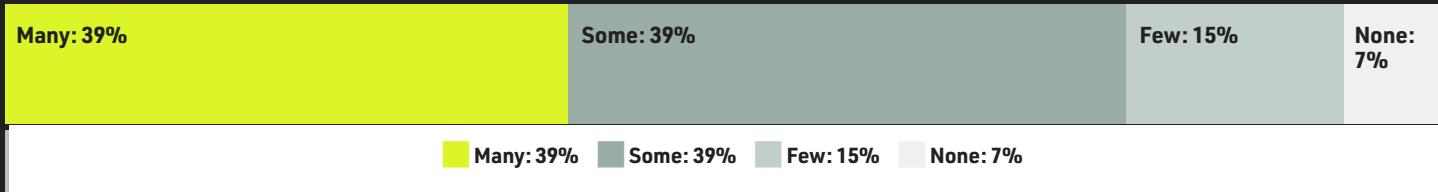


# //TRANSITION EXPERIENCES



The transition from military to civilian life is often a challenging time for IAVA members. We know a successful transition experience can set up many for a life of continued success. However, a difficult transition experience can have the opposite effect.

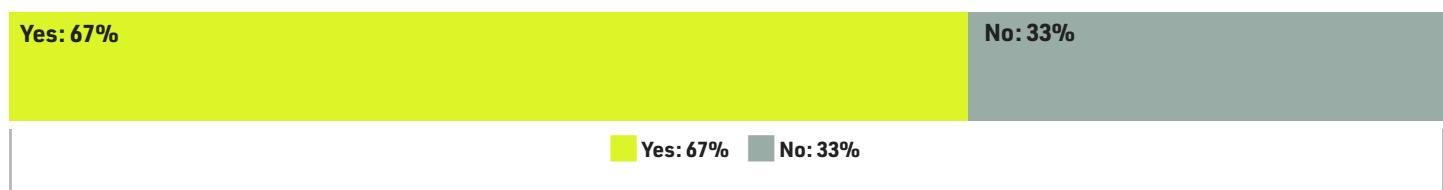
**Did you experience challenges when transitioning out of the military?**



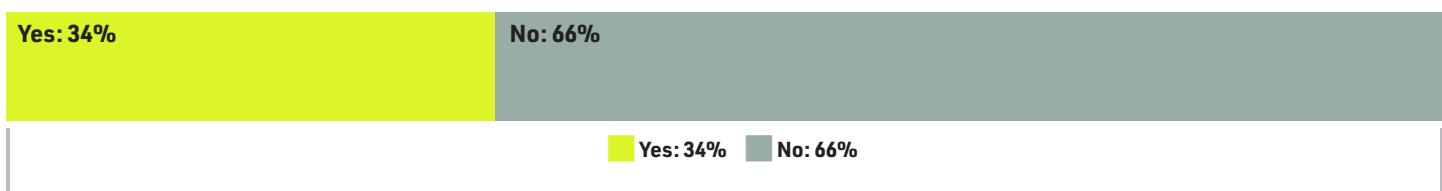
## Top 5 Transition challenges

1. Difficulty navigating VA benefits
2. Loss of identity/purpose
3. Health Concerns (Mental or Physical)
4. Relating to non-veteran civilians/Reintegrating with community
5. Finding/keeping employment as a civilian

Were you prepared to manage your finances immediately after your transition out of the military?



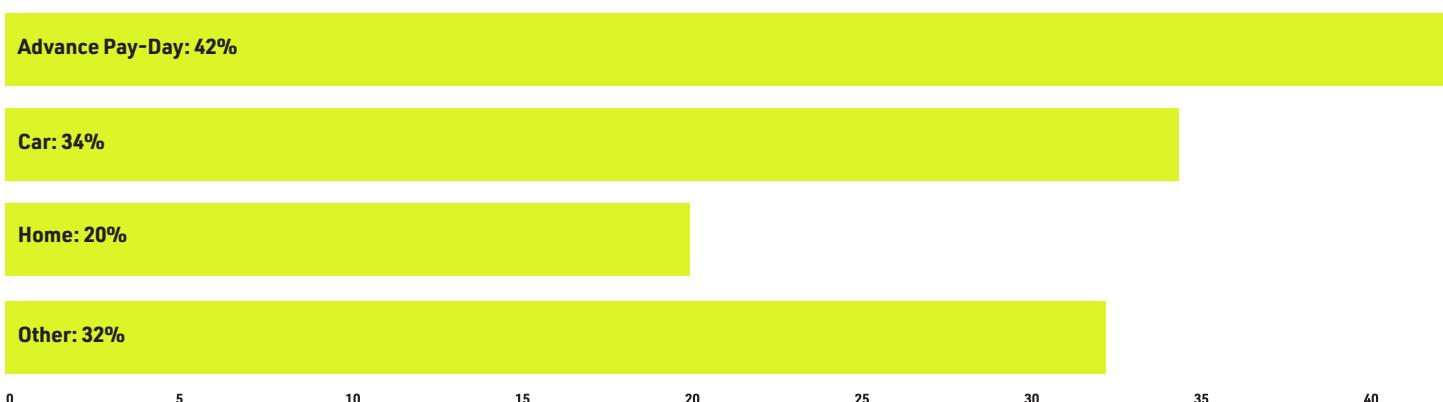
In a typical month is it difficult to cover your expenses and pay all your bills?



**35%**

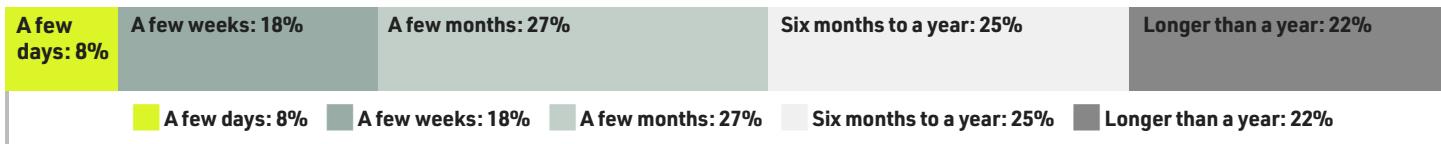
Believe they may have or did experience predatory loan practices, described as deceptive, unfair, or fraudulent practices.

### Predatory Loan Type

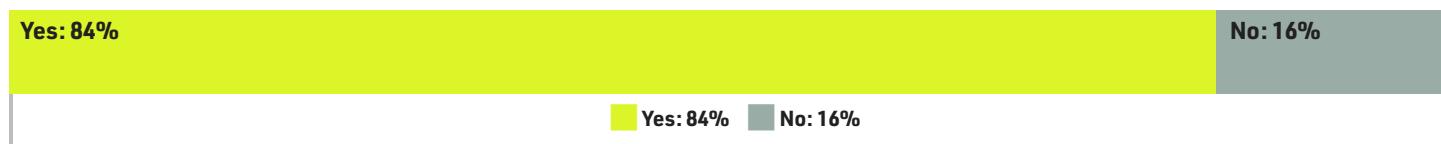


# 22% Did not have a permanent place to live when transitioned out of the military

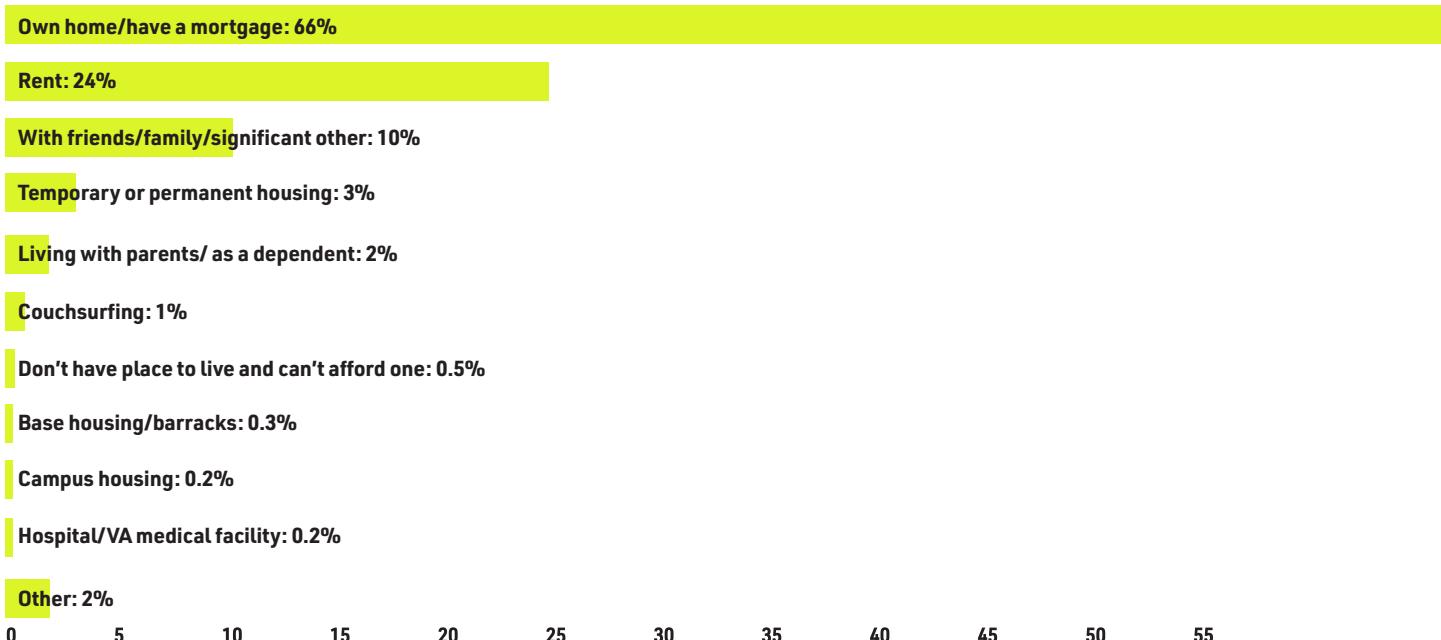
How long were you without a permanent place to live?



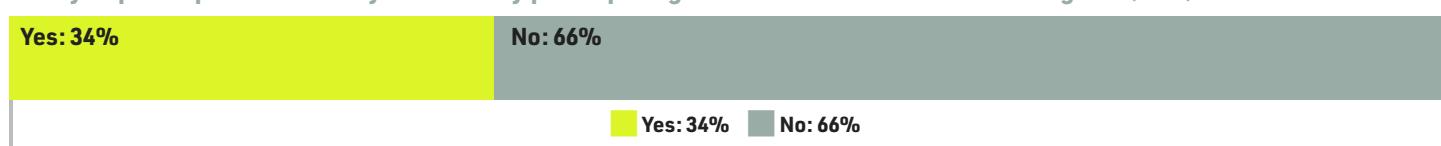
Did you couchsurf, or stay with family or friends temporarily?



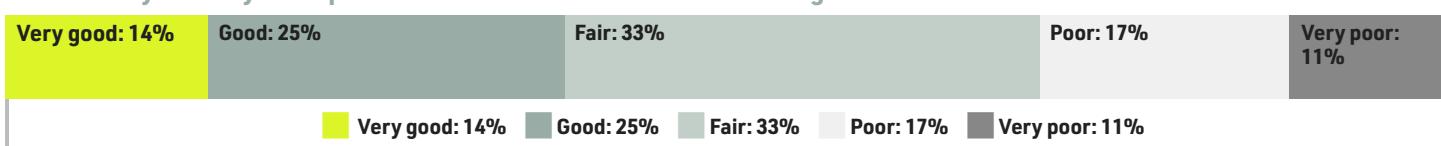
## Current Living Situation:



Have you participated in or are you currently participating in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)?



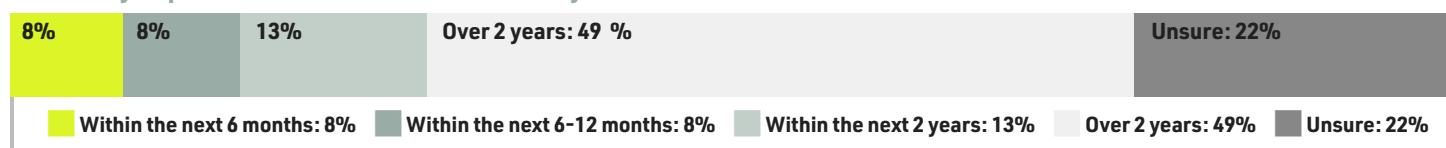
How would you rate your experience in the Transition Assistance Program?



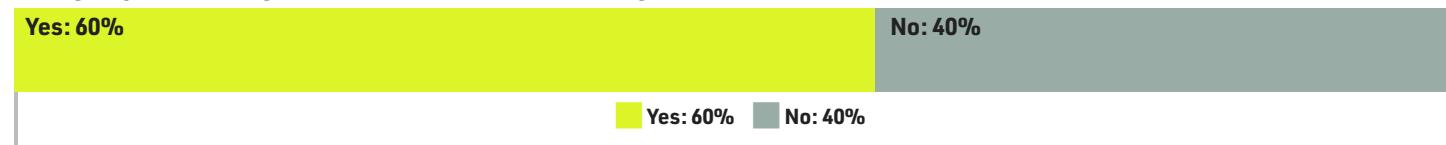
## Active Duty/Guard/Reserve Transition Prep

The following questions were asked of IAVA members who indicated they are still serving in uniform.

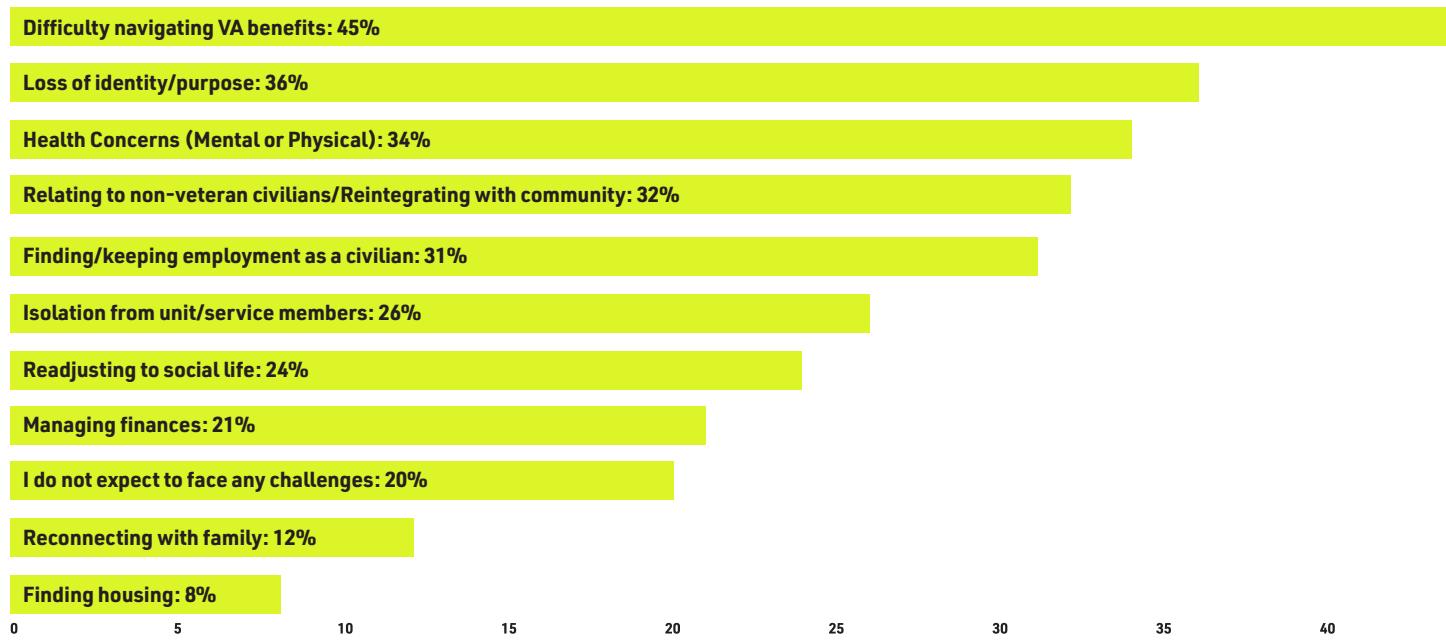
### When do you plan to transition out of the military?



### Have you planned for your transition out of the military?



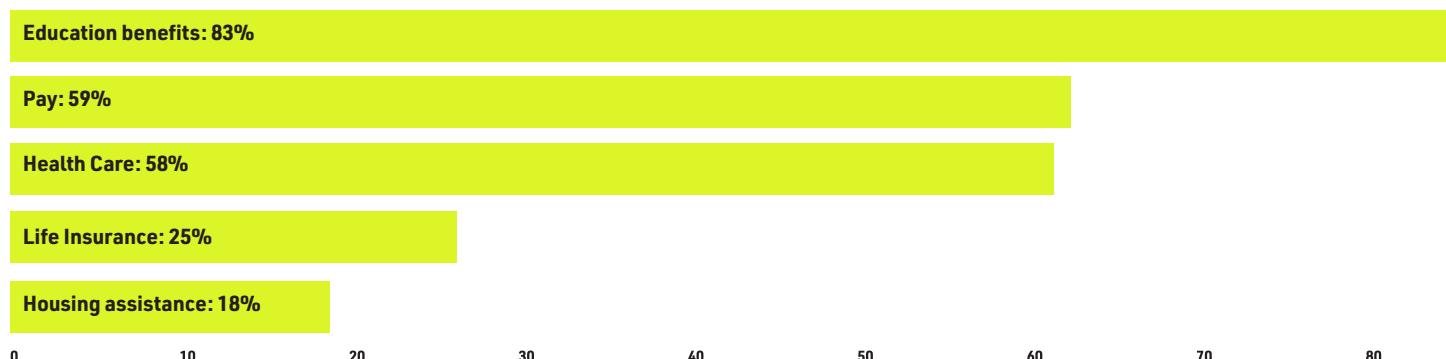
### Challenges expected to face as transition out of military:



### How familiar are you with the public benefits available to you as you transition out of the military?



### Were any of the following benefits influential to your decision to join the military?



# //ISSUES FROM THE HEADLINES

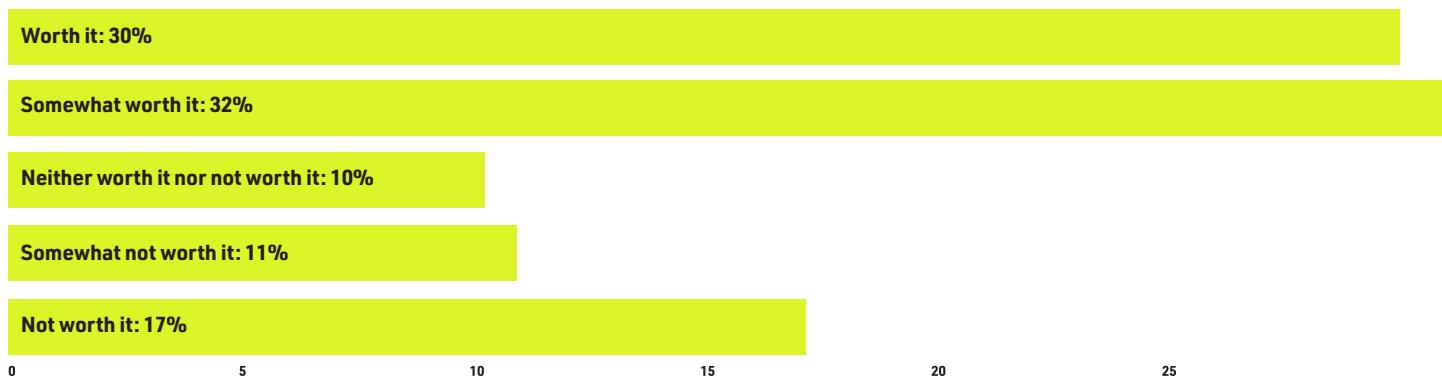


AVVA Members are always ready to sound off on the most important issues impacting not only the post-9/11 generation but also all Americans. From immigration to the NFL protests, to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, IAVA Members are sounding off on the hottest topics of the day.

## In all, do you think our engagement in Iraq was worth it, or not?



## In all, do you think our engagement in Afghanistan is worth it, or not?



## Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Maintaining the Selective Service with the inclusion of women U.S. citizens turning 18 years old in the enrollment process.

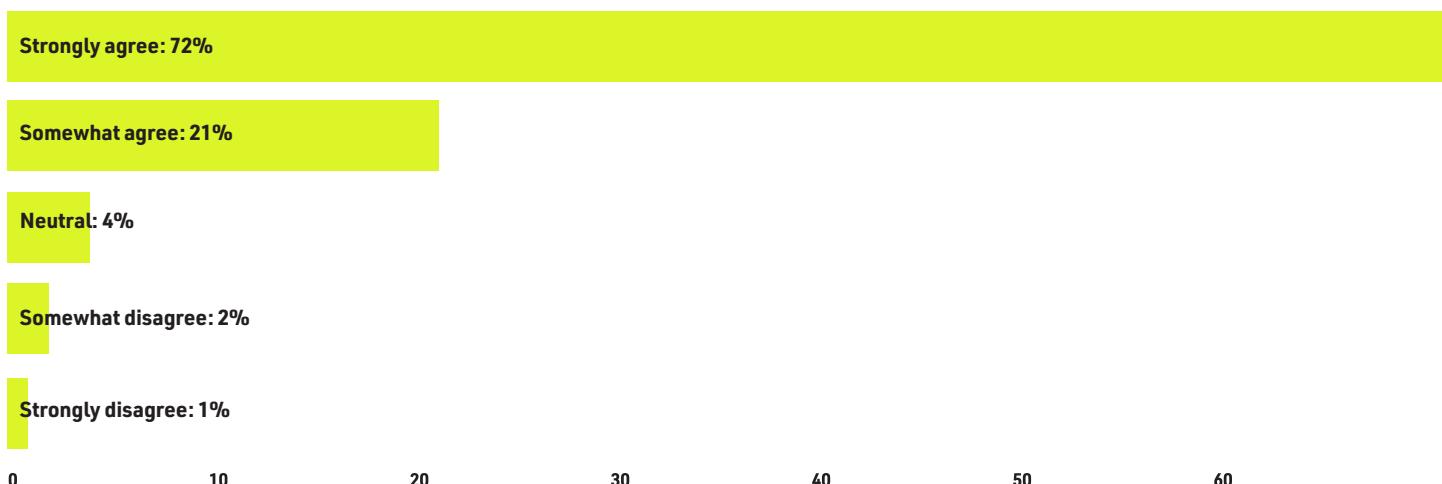


Ending the Selective Service enrollment process (used in the event of a draft) for male U.S. citizens turning 18 years old.

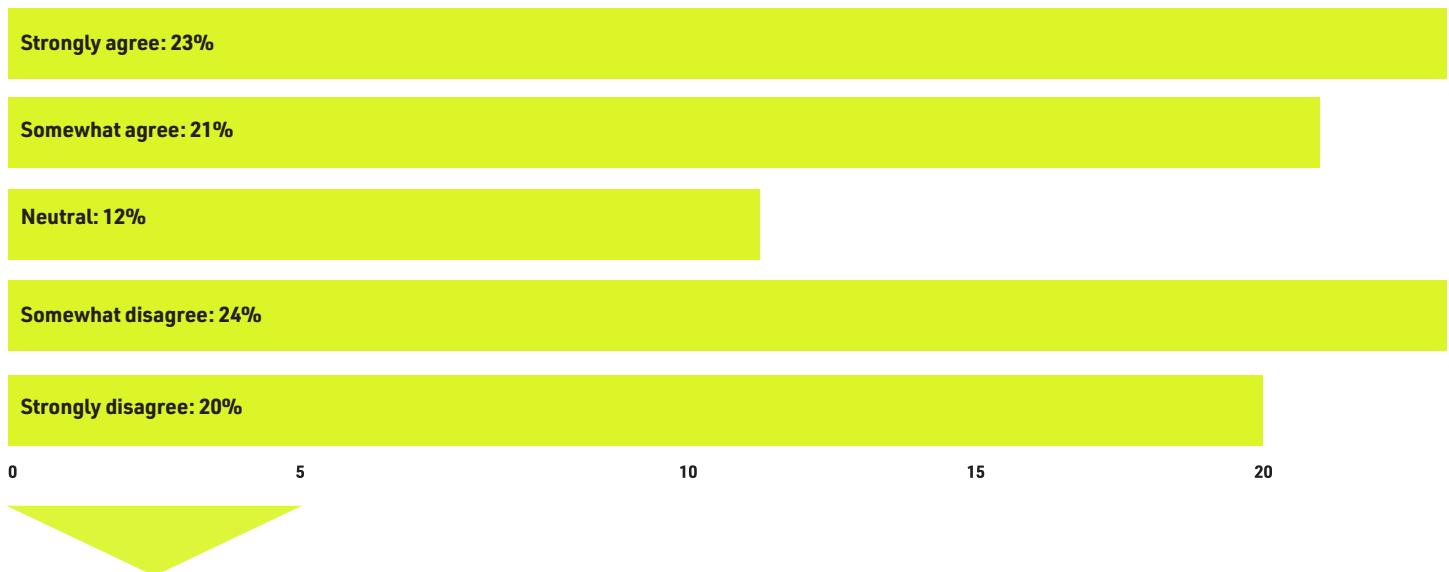


**81%** Agree with the U.S. Special Immigrant Visa Program for Afghan nationals.

Currently, military service can serve as a way to expedite the pathway to U.S. citizenship. What is your opinion of this policy?



**Under current immigration law, non-citizens may be deported after committing a crime, regardless of veteran status or military service. What is your opinion of this policy?**



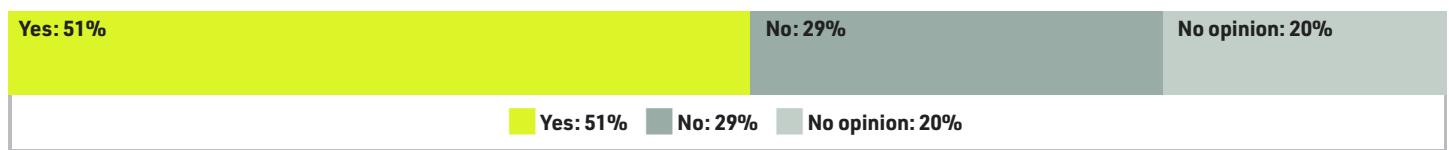
**4%** have been personally impacted by this immigration policy.

**11%** know a post-9/11 veteran impacted by this policy.

**Opinion on allowing openly transgender persons to participate in military service:**



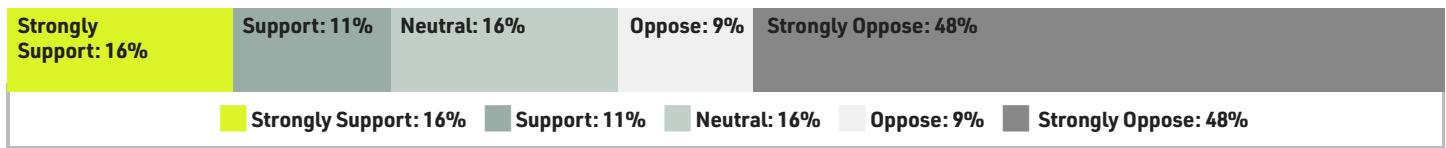
**Support for the repeal of the "Dont Ask, Dont Tell" (DADT):**



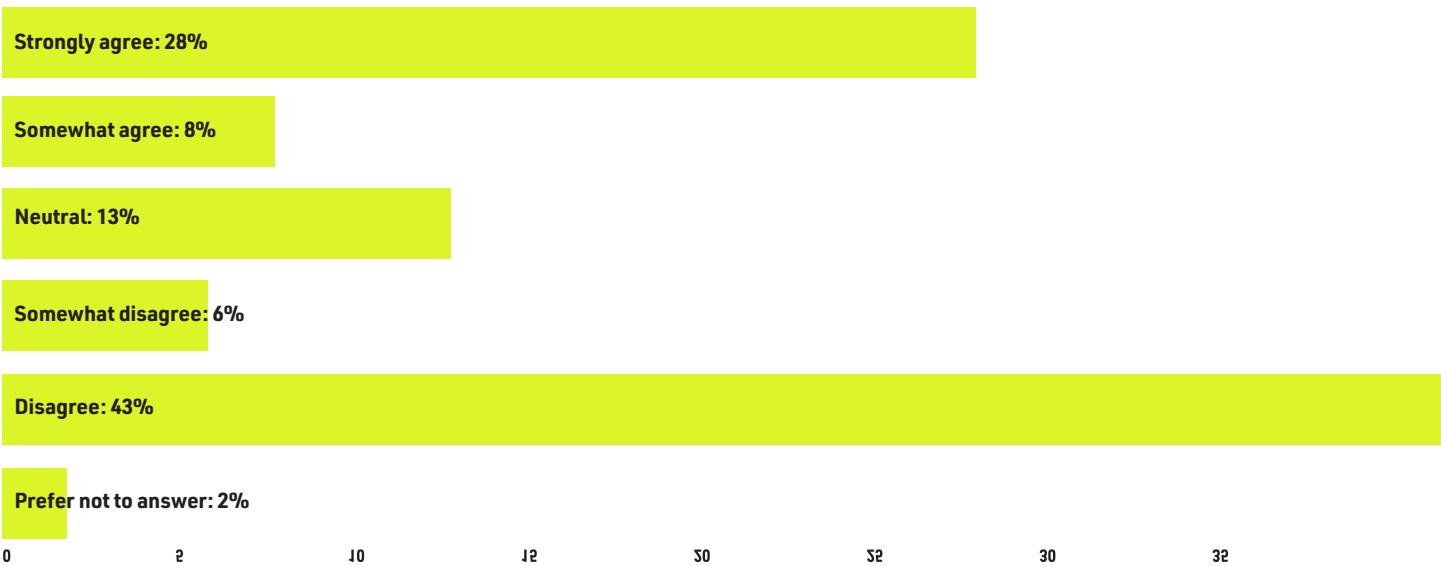
**Top 3 most important issues for post-9/11 veterans:**

1. Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
2. Employment and Jobs
3. VA Reform

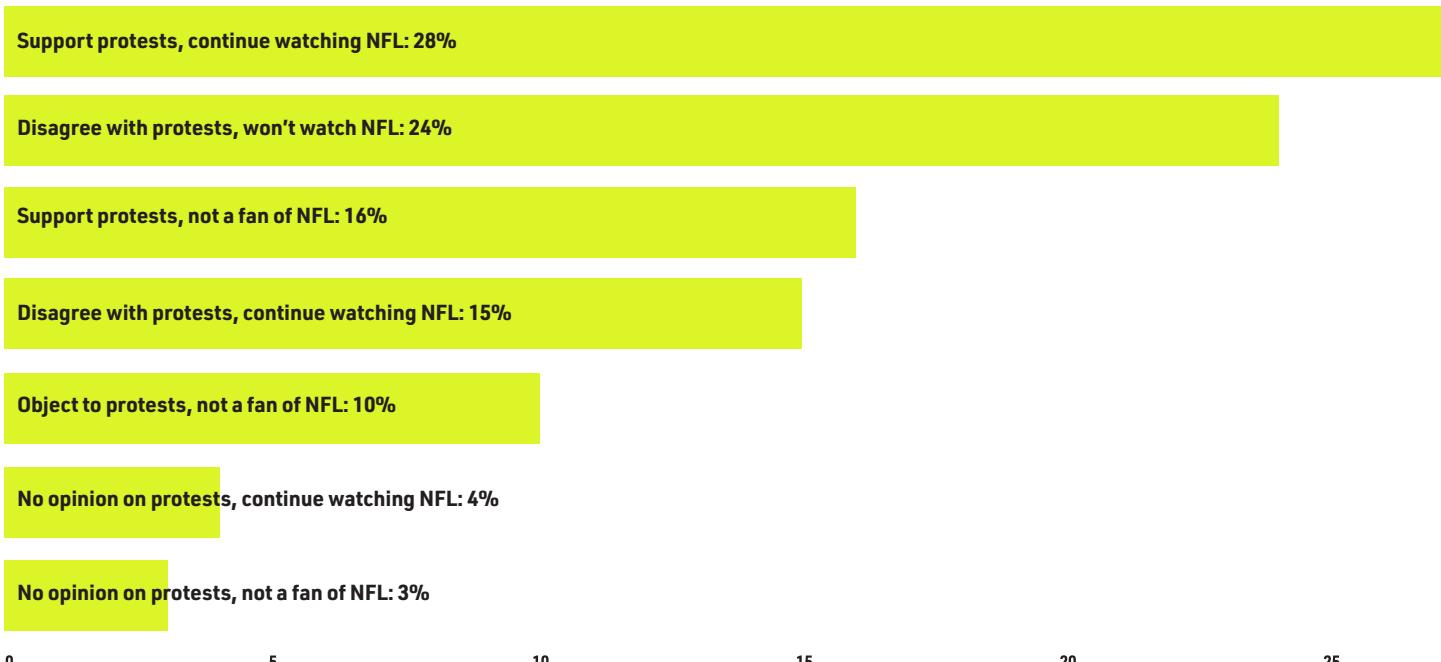
**Earlier this year, President Trump requested a military parade from the Pentagon. Please rate your support for the President's proposed military parade:**



**What is your opinion of the ongoing "NFL protests" where players kneel during the national anthem to protest social injustices?**

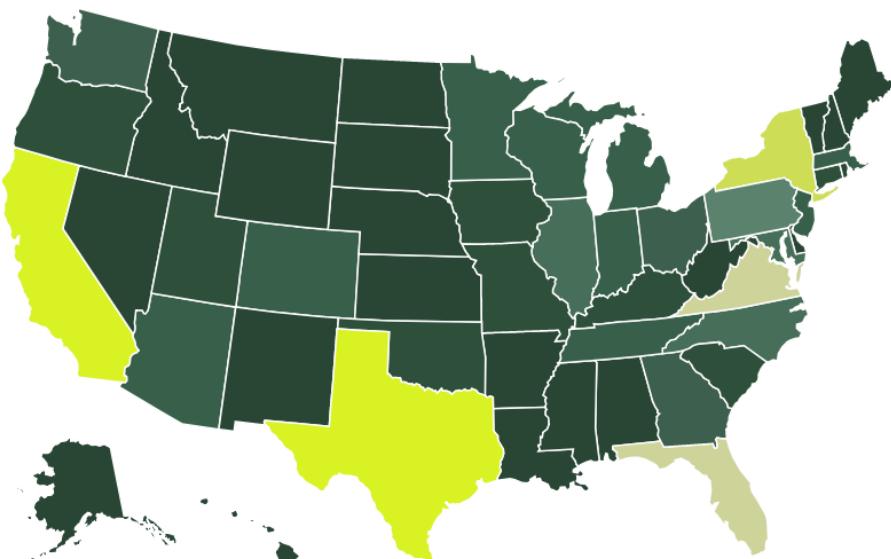


**How do you plan to respond to the various protests during professional sports games?**



# //SURVEY METHODOLOGY

## Distribution of Respondents



0%

10%

4,600 IAVA Members took and completed this year's survey. That is a record number. With a 1% margin of error at the 95% confidence interval, we can be confident that the numbers and views reflected in this survey accurately and precisely reflect that of IAVA's veteran and military population nationwide. The survey was distributed among IAVA's veteran and military members over a month long period from October 19th through November 19th. Almost three-fourths of those that started the survey completed it, a testament to the interest and willingness of our members to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. An incentive to complete the survey was provided, Southwest flight vouchers, a common practice in survey design. For more on our methodology, see below.\*

\*The survey alpha test was distributed among IAVA staff members from July 30 - August 1st and later beta tested among a dozen IAVA leaders and staff members from August 2nd - 6th and October 9th - 15th. The final survey was fielded among all IAVA veteran members from October 19th through November 19th. Emails were sent to IAVA military and veteran members on October 19, 24, November 14, and 16. The opportunity to enter a drawing for five Southwest (SW) Airlines vouchers to fly anywhere SW flies in 2018 was provided as incentive to complete the survey. Social media was utilized to encourage post-9/11 veterans to join IAVA and take the survey. New members were also provided a link in the welcome email received during this time frame. A total of 4,600 participants completed the survey, a record number; 1,586 started the survey but did not complete it, which made for a 74% completion rate. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 1% at the 95% confidence interval.

# //AUTHOR



Stephanie Mullen serves as the Research Director for IAVA, leading the annual member survey and additional research projects. As part of the Policy Department, Steph translates IAVA members' experiences and views based on surveys and polling to advise the Policy Department on legislative and policy positions.

Most recently, Steph has represented IAVA for a panel discussion on PTSD following a screening of the film, Leave No Trace. Steph is a recurring guest on Connecting Vets where she has discussed topics such as suicide prevention and mental health, burn pits, and Department of Veterans Affairs reforms. Before joining the IAVA team, Stephanie served as National Programs Manager for American Veterans, where she kept AMVETS' national programs running on time and on budget. Stephanie is a graduate of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA with a BA in International Relations and a MA in Public Policy and currently part of the 2018 Center for Strategic and International Studies Accelerator Series for rising leaders.

# //THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our IAVA Members who participated in this survey. Thank you to Qualtrics for providing the platform to IAVA for survey fielding.

A special thank you to George Washington Masters in Public Policy program for their counsel on questions and language. Especially Shelley, Amanda, Sara, Max, and Matthew's work as part of their Capstone Project.

This project would not have been possible without the creative vision and talent of Eric Schoenborn. Thank you for all your work and sharing your talent to make this project a success.

And thank you to the contributors below, without whom this work would not be possible:

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IAVA relies on the generosity of our corporate and foundation partnerships and the support of individual contributors to amass the resources necessary to fulfill our mission. This Member Survey is the most comprehensive non governmental survey of post-9/11 veterans and is an important snapshots of the veteran community that no other organization has the ability to replicate. IAVA is the leading voice advocating on behalf of post-9/11 veterans because our community takes the time to share their point of view and they trust IAVA to execute on their behalf. Help us continue this vital work, by donating to support IAVA's mission today!



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