

DAV urges President-elect Trump to consider retaining Bob McDonald as VA Secretary

DAV Executive Director Garry J. Augustine today released the following statement on President-elect Trump's upcoming decision about the next Veterans Affairs Secretary:

"As President-elect Trump focuses on choosing who will lead the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we highly recommend he meet with current VA Secretary Bob McDonald, a businessman like himself, to get an honest perspective of the challenges facing veterans and the opportunities for strengthening VA.

"As an outsider, and someone who was never a politician or bureaucrat, Bob McDonald began his tenure by taking a hard, objective look at VA's problems as well as its strengths. After methodically assessing the challenges veterans faced, he recruited a new leadership team from the private sector to develop and begin implementing the most comprehensive cultural changes VA has seen in a generation.

"In just two years since Bob McDonald became Secretary, he has been able to turn around a Department in crisis by applying his business acumen to shake up the second largest agency in the federal government.

"Over the past year, Secretary McDonald and his leadership team worked closely with outside experts and veteran stakeholders to develop historic reforms of VA's health care and benefit appeals systems. There is no one today better positioned to see these critical changes through to completion than Bob McDonald.

"Having worked closely with Secretary McDonald from his first day in office, I'm confident that President-elect Trump would

be well-served by meeting with him, and even more so by asking him to continue his service as VA Secretary.

“By almost every measure real progress has been made, including rising confidence by America’s veteran that VA can meet their needs. With comprehensive transformation of veterans health care and benefit programs well underway, now is not the time to change direction.

“Too many veterans suffered unacceptable delays in recent years trying to access their earned benefits or health care, and they cannot afford to wait even longer while a new Secretary and leadership team start from square one, only to reach the same conclusions.

“We hope President-elect Trump will meet with Secretary McDonald and give serious consideration to keeping him as VA Secretary in order to complete the work he began.”