

DAV calls on Congress, President Trump to support VA Secretary

By DAV National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster

DAV strongly supported the unanimous confirmation of Dr. David Shulkin as Secretary of Veterans Affairs in February 2017, and a year later we echo those sentiments. During his tenure, VA has revamped the appeals process, increased access to mental health care and addressed crisis center call line inadequacies. He has done that and so much more while battling internal politics that have recently come to light.

We hold the VA to a high standard—its leadership even more so. While we were troubled to learn of the recent IG findings, we believe Secretary Shulkin took appropriate steps in reimbursing the department for any and all financial obligations found to be outside the scope of his official travel. We hope that this action will not only resolve the situation at hand, but that this will be a singular instance in which the Secretary's ethics are called into question.

However, we remain extremely concerned that in the current political climate, efforts are underway to undermine the Secretary's mission to strengthen and modernize VA as opposed to outright privatize the nation's largest integrated healthcare system. Millions of veterans—including those most severely injured and ill in service—choose and rely on VA for their health care. It's troubling to think there are efforts working against what is best for veterans and jeopardizing what we believe has been strong leadership within VA, to include the secretary and new deputy secretary.

We have not always agreed with the Secretary, but we believe

he is a proven advocate for veterans—not special interest groups who openly advocate shrinking and dismantling the VA. Today, we offer our support for Secretary Shulkin and his vision for veterans' health care, one that has bipartisan support in Congress and across the veteran service organization community. On behalf of DAV's more than one million members, we ask the President and Congress to extend that same support for the work the Secretary has already done and for the sake of continuing the many efforts currently underway to reform the department.

About DAV:

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; providing employment resources to veterans and their families and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with more than one million members was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932.