



IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN  
VETERANS OF AMERICA

2013

# MEMBER SURVEY



## IAVA'S 2013 MEMBER SURVEY

A snapshot of America's New Greatest Generation

As the nation's first and largest nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to improving the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families, IAVA has a real-time understanding of what our members think, believe and experience. Every day we hear from our members on Facebook, Twitter, and through Community of Veterans, our confidential online social network exclusively for confirmed Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

In order to best serve our members, we conduct an annual member survey to dig deeper into the challenges and opportunities of their day-to-day lives. This survey is the largest annual, non-governmental survey sample of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, four times larger than the Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly sample of Gulf War Era II Vets.

Survey responses directly inform our Policy Agenda and organizational priorities for the coming year, as well as shape our membership programs and partnerships. Our members' answers also allow us to compare their changing needs from year to year and help to fill gaps in public knowledge about this new generation of veterans.

Our annual member survey is designed to help us gain a deep understanding of a wide range of veteran issues. In February 2013, we asked our members approximately 250 quantitative and qualitative questions. Almost every survey question invites our members to elaborate on their answers and tell their stories.

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## 1 The Post-9/11 GI Bill continues to be an incredible asset for improving the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

- 42% of respondents or their dependents are either using or have used their GI Bill benefits.
- 69% of respondents currently in school are using the GI Bill, 50% of whom are pursuing their Bachelor's Degree.

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## 2 Veterans' unemployment remains a focal point for IAVA.

- 16% of IAVA Member Survey respondents are unemployed.
- 45% of respondents that are unemployed have been unemployed for one year or longer.

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## 3 The VA Claims Backlog poses a great challenge to IAVA's membership.

- 40% of respondents have a claim pending with the VA.
- 74% of these have been waiting for more than 120 days.
- 45% have been waiting longer than one year.

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## 4 Survey respondents ranked suicide as the most important issue facing Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

- 30% of members surveyed have considered taking their own life.
- 37% of respondents know a veteran who has committed suicide.

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## 5 Women veterans are not receiving the care they need.

- 62% of female respondents do not have a positive view of the VA's care for women.
- 32% report that they do not see doctors that specialize in women's care.

### Methodology

The 2013 member survey was open to our membership through a secure online questionnaire between February 3 and February 17, 2013, and 4,104 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans participated. The respondents include 3,274 confirmed veterans, who submitted to IAVA a governmental proof of wartime service (i.e., DD214) in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation New Dawn, and 840 unconfirmed veterans, who did not submit said record(s).

## DEMOGRAPHICS

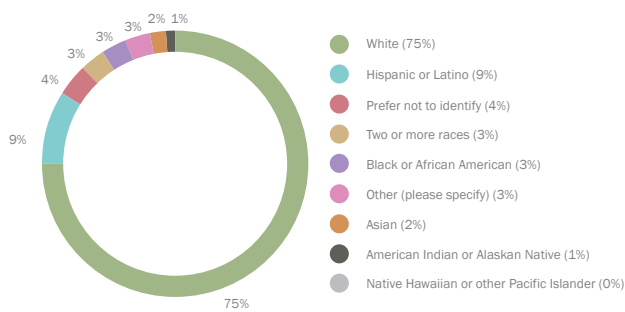
### Where did you serve?

Iraq	60%
Afghanistan	16%
Both	23%

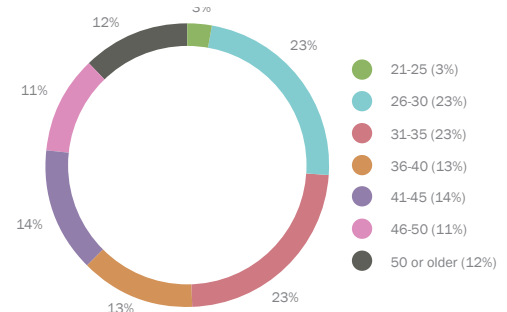
### Are you Enlisted or an Officer?

Enlisted	82%
Officer	18%

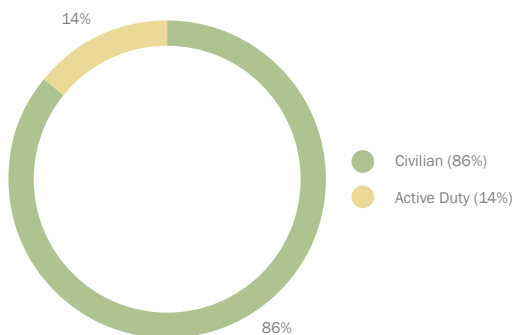
### Ethnicity



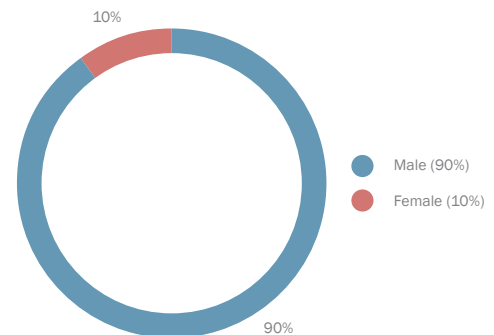
### Age



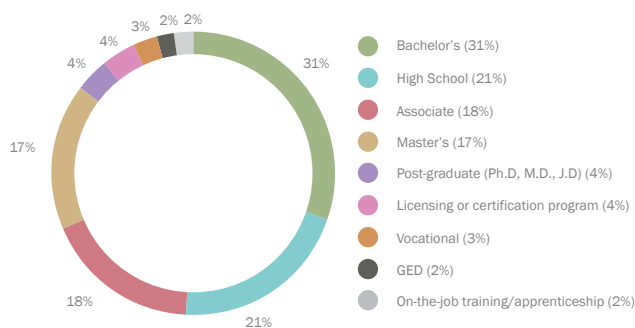
### Service Status



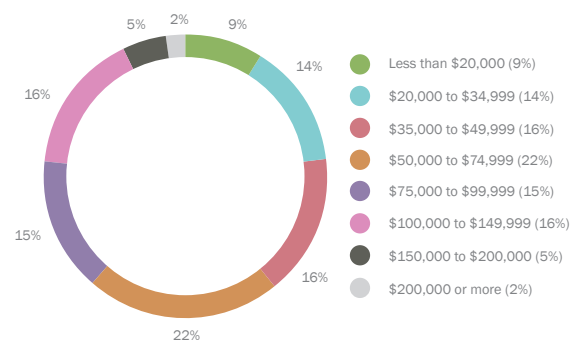
### Gender



### Educational Level

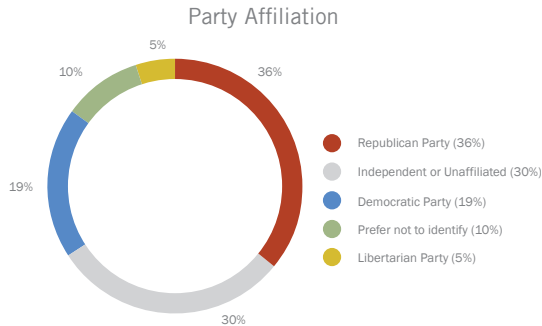


### Income Level

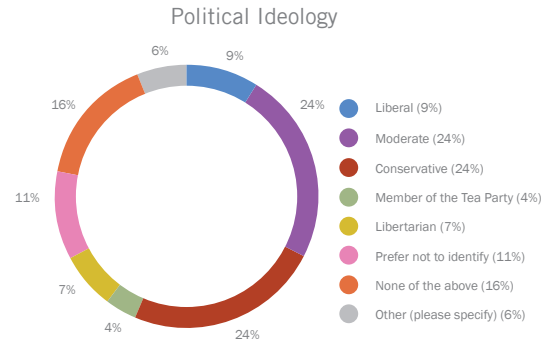


## POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**30% of respondents are Independent or unaffiliated with a political party**

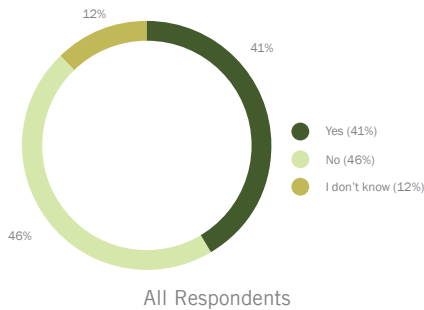


**24% of respondents view themselves as moderates**

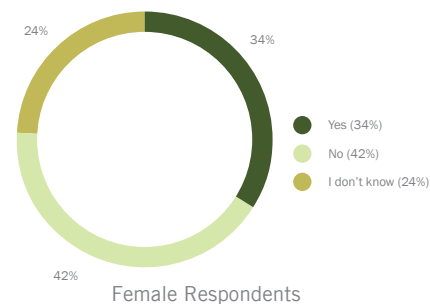


## FEMALES IN COMBAT

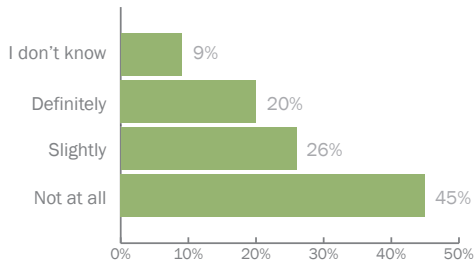
**41% of all respondents support the opening of all MOSs to women**



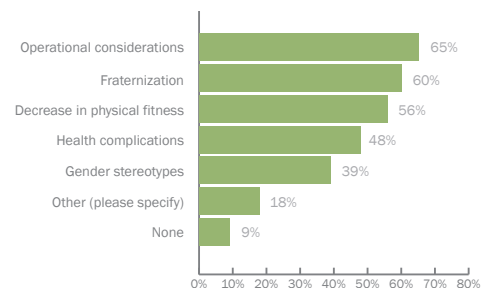
**34% of female respondents would apply for a combat MOS**



In your opinion, do you think women's advancement in the military has been limited by restrictions on women in combat?



The greatest concerns given by members regarding expanding the role of women in combat:



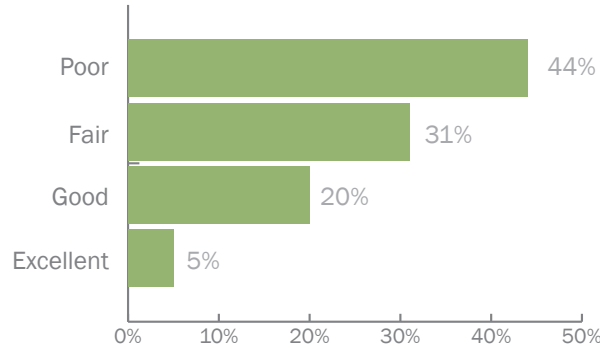
## THE REPEAL OF DADT

- 31% of respondents have served with an openly-gay service member
- 50% of respondents who served with an openly-gay service member said the repeal of DADT had no effect on mission readiness
- 22% said the repeal had a positive impact
- 53% of respondents support extending DoD benefits to same-sex domestic partners

## WHO SUPPORTS VETERANS?

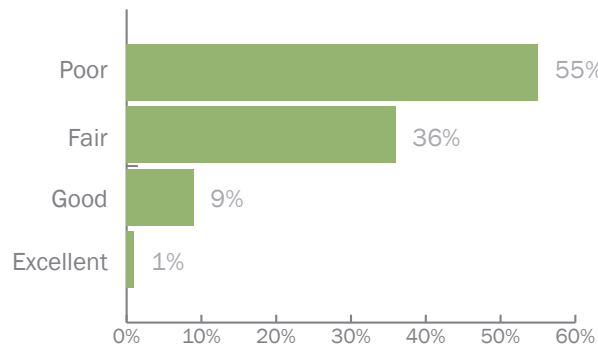
### Presidential Performance

How would you rate the President's performance on improving the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans?



### Congressional Performance

How would you rate Congress's performance on improving the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans?



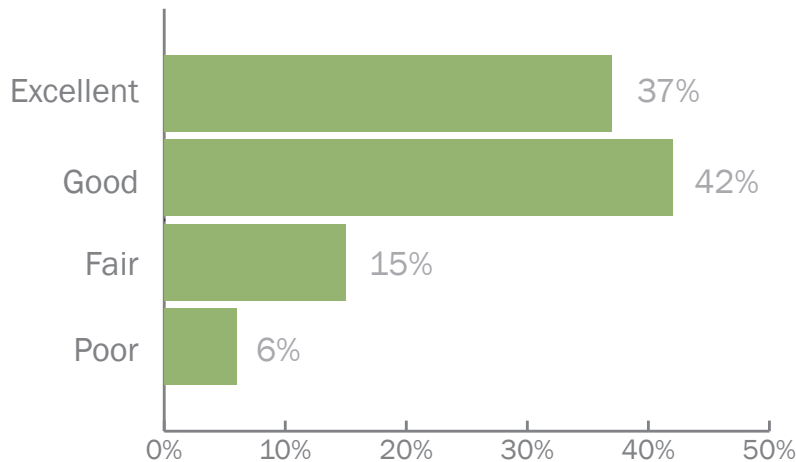
### Respondents' opinions on America's support for veterans

	Agree or Strongly Agree	No opinion	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
The President listens enough to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.	25%	13%	<b>66%</b>
Congress listens enough to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.	9%	11%	<b>80%</b>
The VA listens enough to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.	30%	20%	<b>50%</b>
The American public supports Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.	<b>58%</b>	15%	27%
Corporate America supports Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.	35%	22%	<b>44%</b>

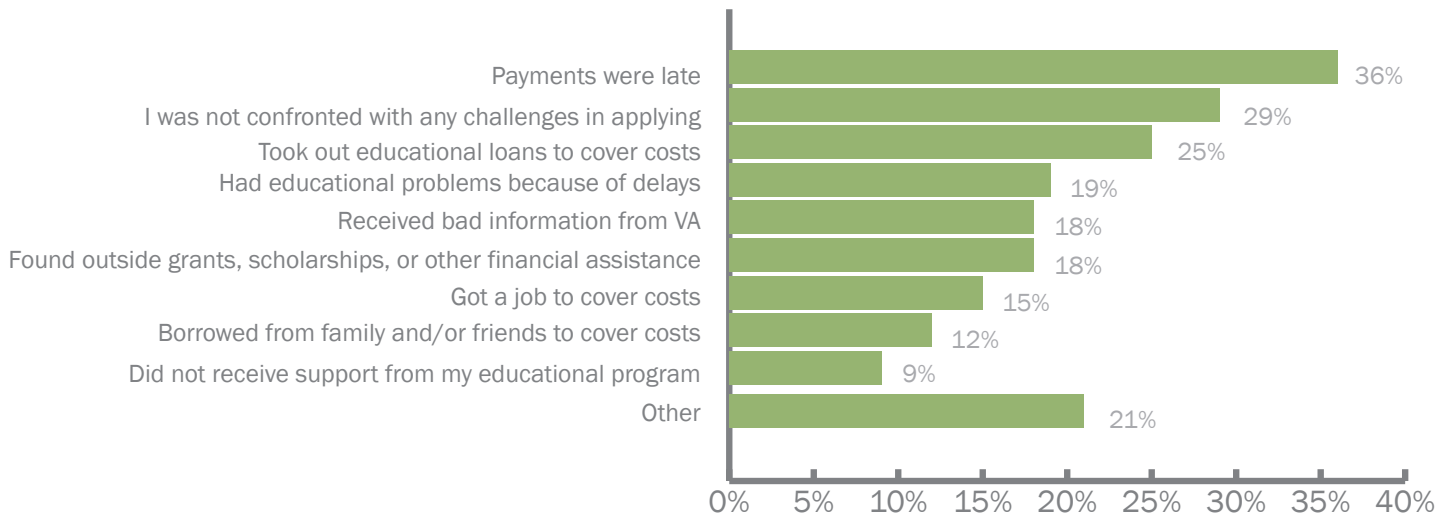
## POST-9/11 GI BILL

### 69% of respondents that are currently in school are using the Post-9/11 GI Bill

- 79% of respondents that used the GI Bill rate their experience as good or excellent



### The greatest challenges with the Post-9/11 GI Bill:



### Late payments place an unnecessary burden on respondents and their families

- 89% had more than one late payment; 9% had more than 10
- 60% say the VA was unhelpful in resolving the matter
- 56% incurred debt as a result of the late payments

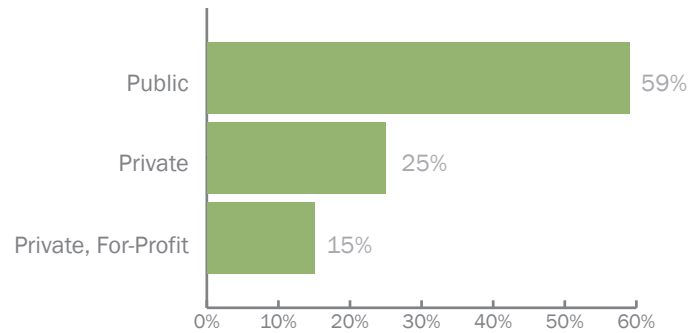
Only answered by people who had late payments

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

**84% of respondents in school are satisfied with their educational program**

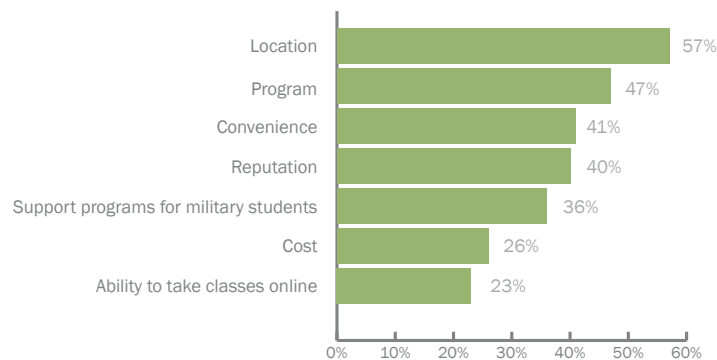
- 74% of respondents currently in school rate their program as “Veteran-Friendly”

Type of schools IAVA student respondents are attending:

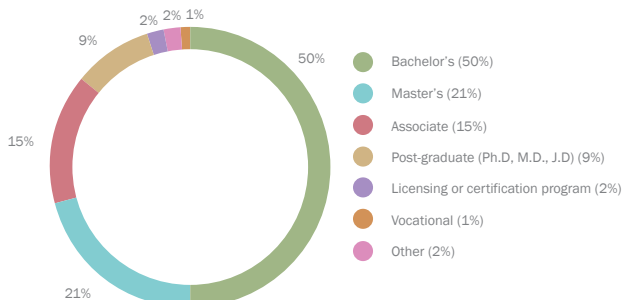


**Location is the most influential factor for IAVA members’ decisions on school**

Influential Factors



**50% of IAVA student respondents are pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree**



Type of Degree

**IAVA student respondents’ Top Five Degree Fields**

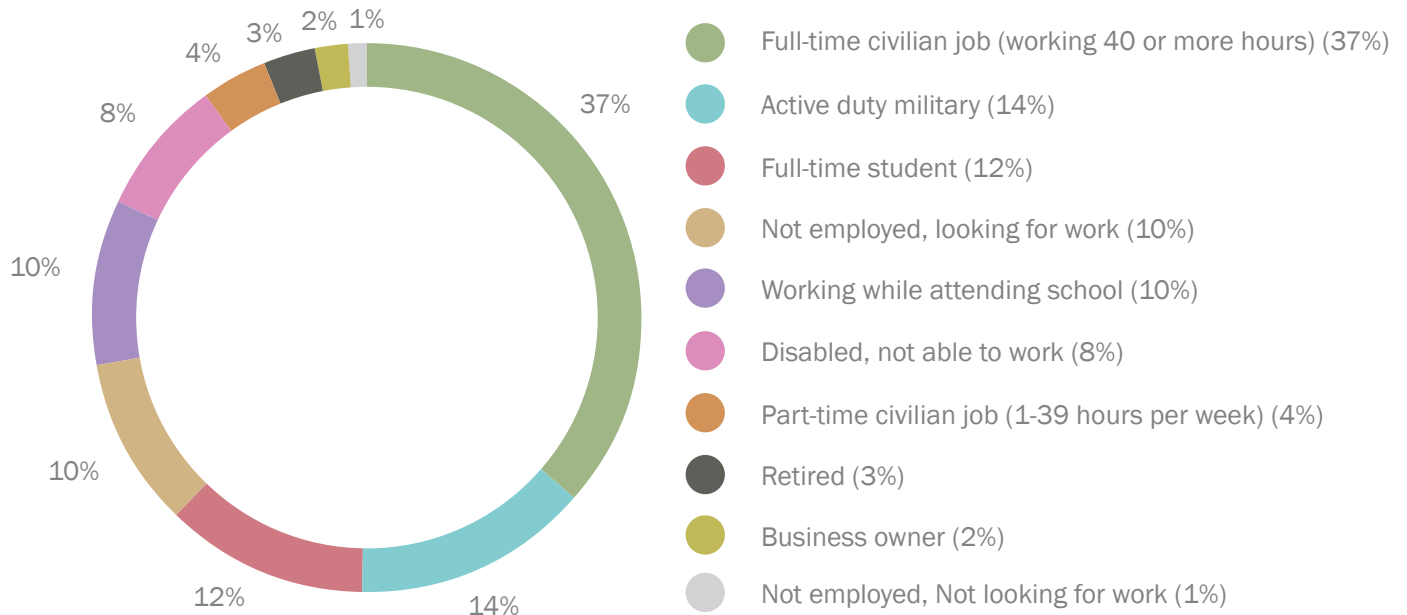
1. Business, Management, etc. (18%)
2. Computer, Info. Sciences (10%)
3. Health Professions (10%)
4. Engineering (5%)
5. Social Sciences (5%)



## EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

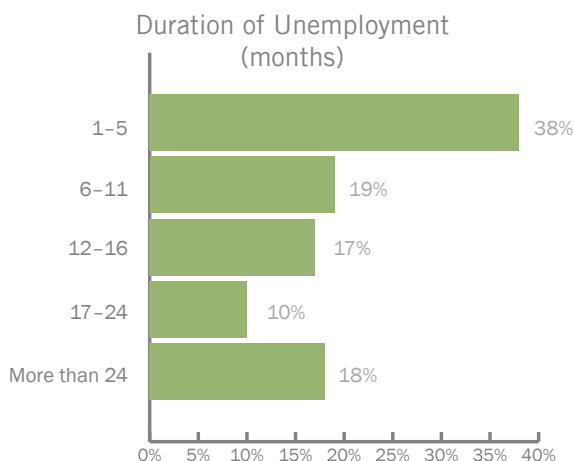
The Unemployment Rate among survey respondents is 16%\*

Employment status of 2013 IAVA Member Survey Respondents

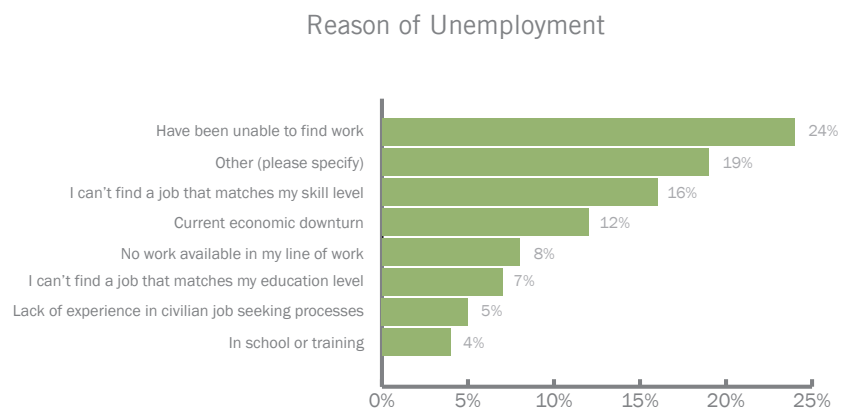


\*Unemployment Rate calculated by dividing those that are not employed and looking for work by those working both full and part time, working and going to school, and business owners.

**45% of unemployed respondents have been so for one year or longer**



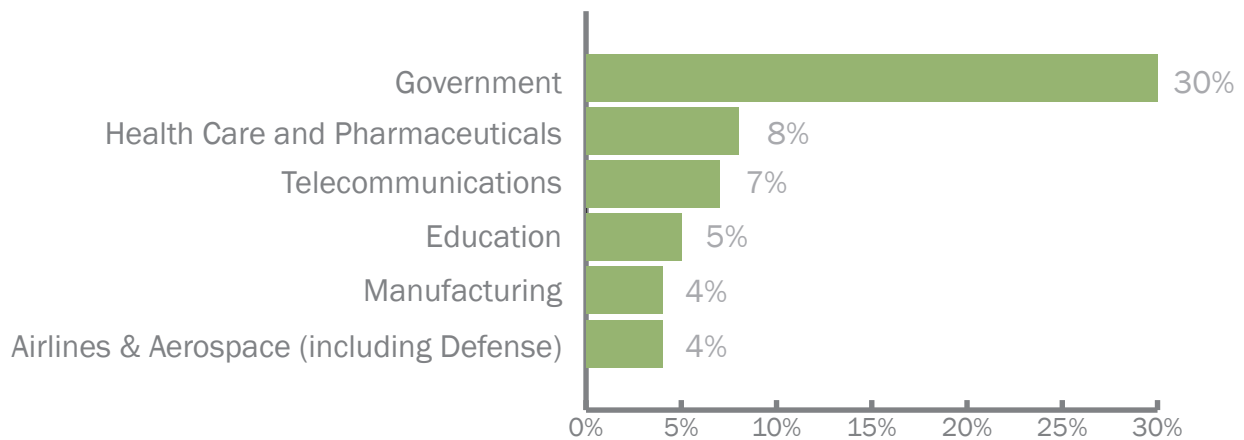
**24% of unemployed respondents are unable to find work**



## EMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

**79% of respondents employed either part-time or full-time view their employer as “Veteran-Friendly”**

- 67% of respondents employed full-time are satisfied with their current employer
- 30% of respondents employed either part-time or full-time work in government jobs

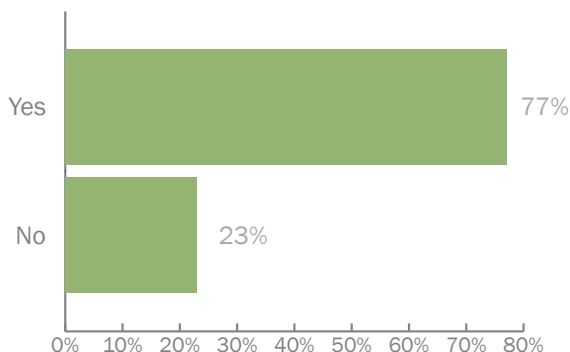


### Top-Rated resources used to find work

- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. USAjobs.gov       | 63% |
| 2. Friends           | 33% |
| 3. Monster.com       | 31% |
| 4. Careerbuilder.com | 26% |

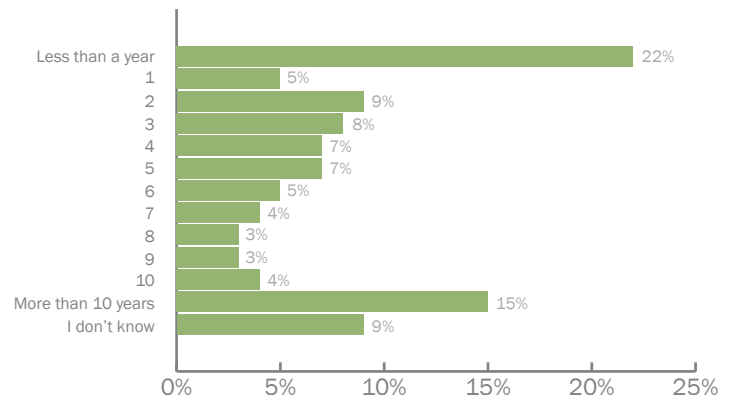
**77% of Active-Duty respondents plan to stay active until retirement**

Stay in until retirement?



**22% of Active-Duty respondents plan to separate in the next year**

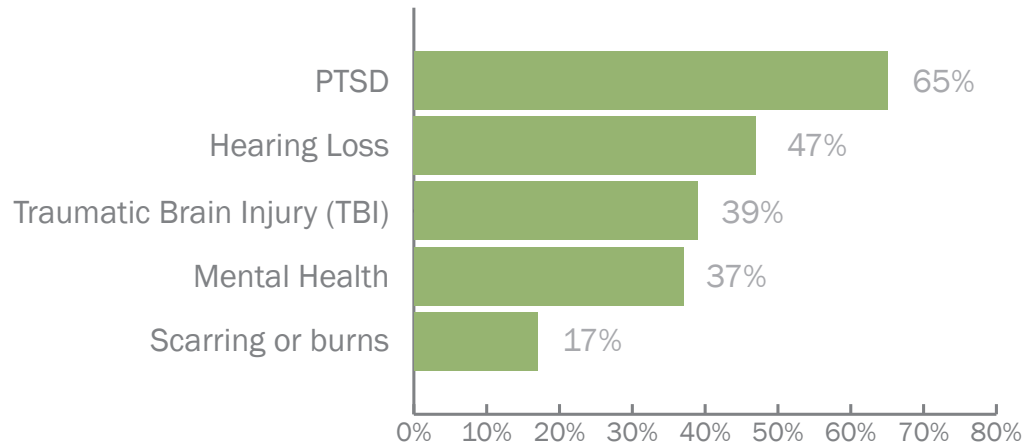
Years until Separation



## 30% of respondents were physically wounded in service

- 79% of those physically wounded in service have received a disability rating
- 77% of those with a disability rating have a rating of 50% or greater

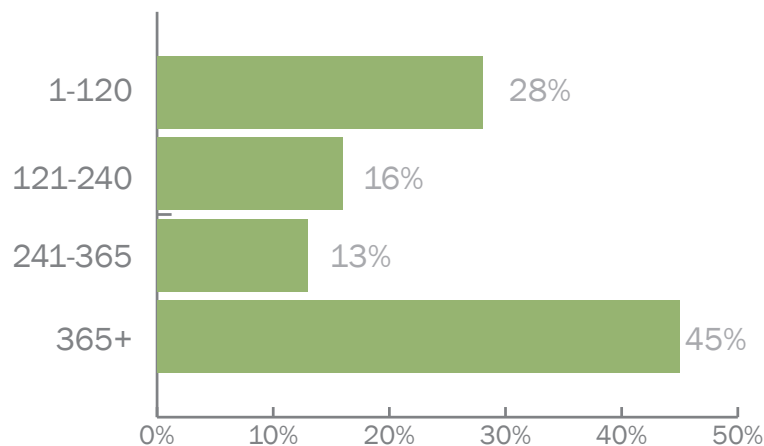
The largest sources of disability are:



## 40% of respondents have a pending VA Disability Claim

- 74% of respondents with a claim pending have been waiting for more than 120 days
- 45% of respondents with a claim have been waiting for more than a year

Days Waiting for Claim



## 36% of respondents have appealed a VA Claims Decision

- 40% of respondents who appealed a VA Claims decision were not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal

## SUICIDE & CARE STIGMA

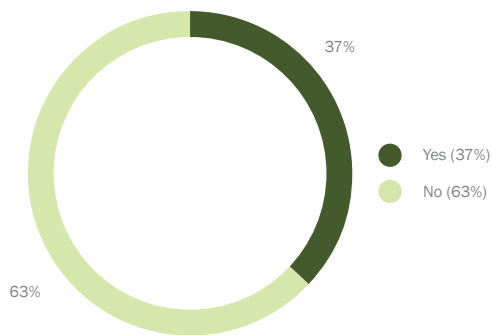
### 63% of respondents have veteran friends who they feel need care for a mental health injury

- 91% of those respondents suggested that their friend seek mental health care

### 30% of respondents have thought of taking their own lives

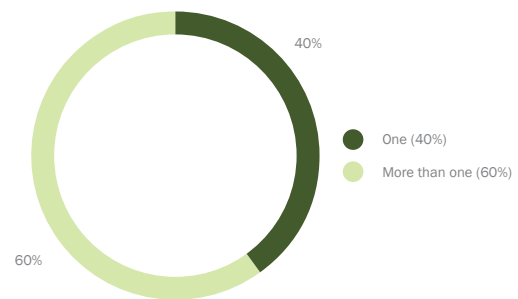
- 45% of respondents know an Iraq/Afghanistan veteran who has attempted suicide

37% of respondents know an Iraq/ Afghanistan veteran who has committed suicide



Friend Committed Suicide

Of the 37% of respondents who know an Iraq or Afghanistan veteran who has committed suicide, 60% know more than one

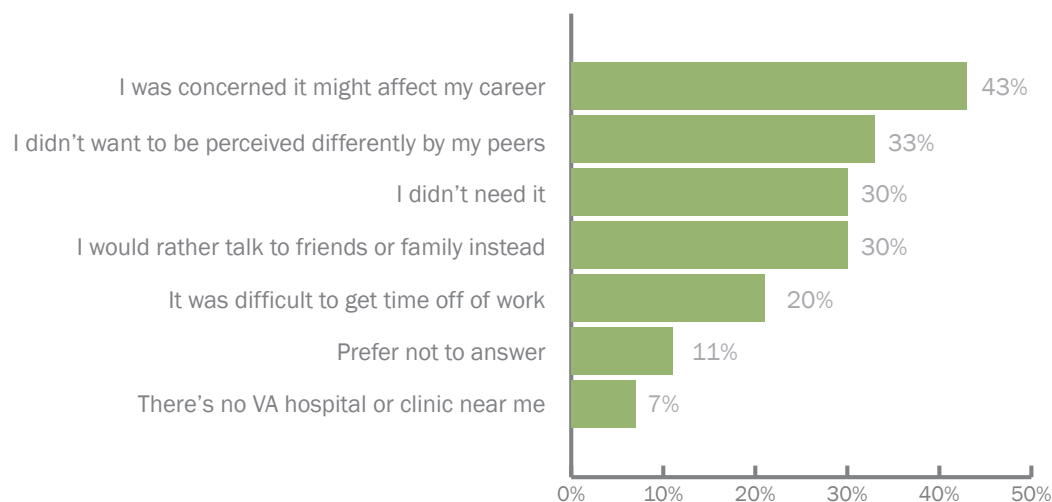


Number of Friends Who Have Committed Suicide

### 50% of respondents have had people close to them suggest they seek care for a mental health injury

- 19% of those respondents did not seek care

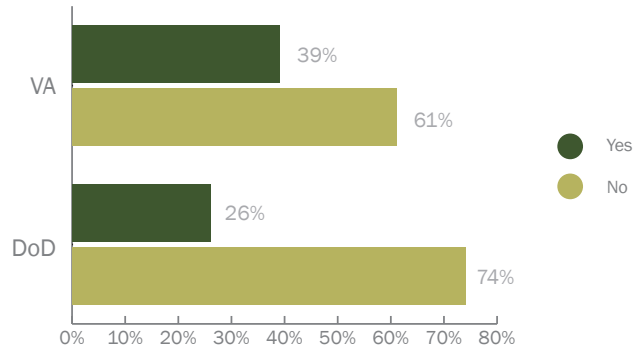
The top reasons for not seeking care were:



## PERCEPTIONS & RESOURCES

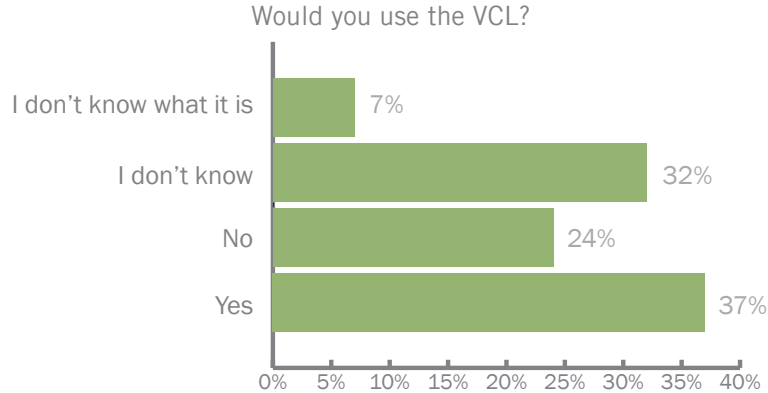
### 80% of respondents do not think veterans are getting the care they need for mental health injuries

Do you think the DoD and VA are doing a good job of providing adequate support to troops and veterans regarding their mental health injuries and care?

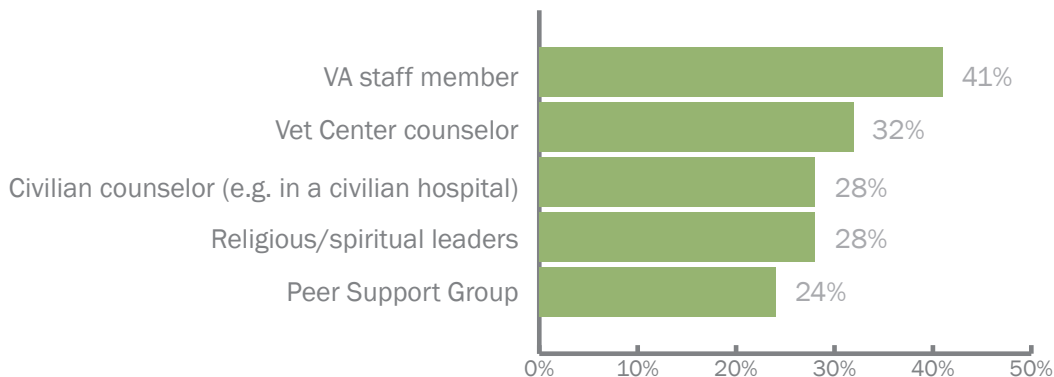


### 93% of respondents are aware of the VA's Veteran Crisis Line (VCL)

- 37% of respondents would use the VCL if they were feeling suicidal



Highest-rated mental health resources according to respondents who utilized these services.



## CARE FOR WOMEN

**62% of female respondents either have a neutral or negative opinion on the VA's care and treatment of female veterans**

- 52% of female respondents have not been contacted by the VA regarding their eligibility for female-centric VA services and benefits

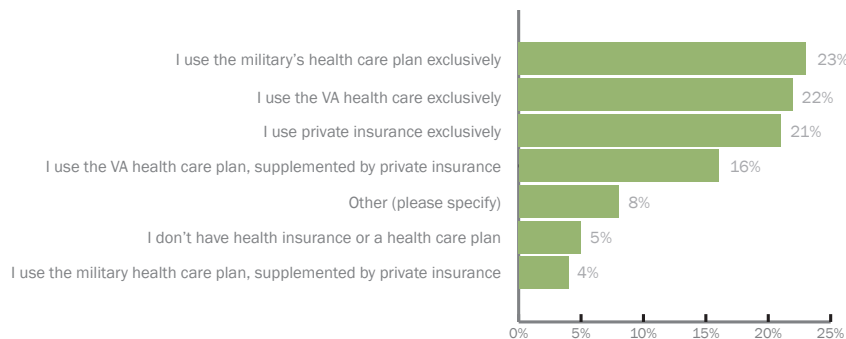
VA services- Female respondents on whether the VA provides them with the following:

	Yes	No	Not Important to Me
A safe and comfortable environment	64%	28%	8%
Female practitioners	61%	22%	17%
Doctors who specialize in women's health care	57%	32%	11%
Specialized facilities	48%	40%	12%
Information relating to women's health care	52%	39%	10%
Childcare	6%	30%	64%

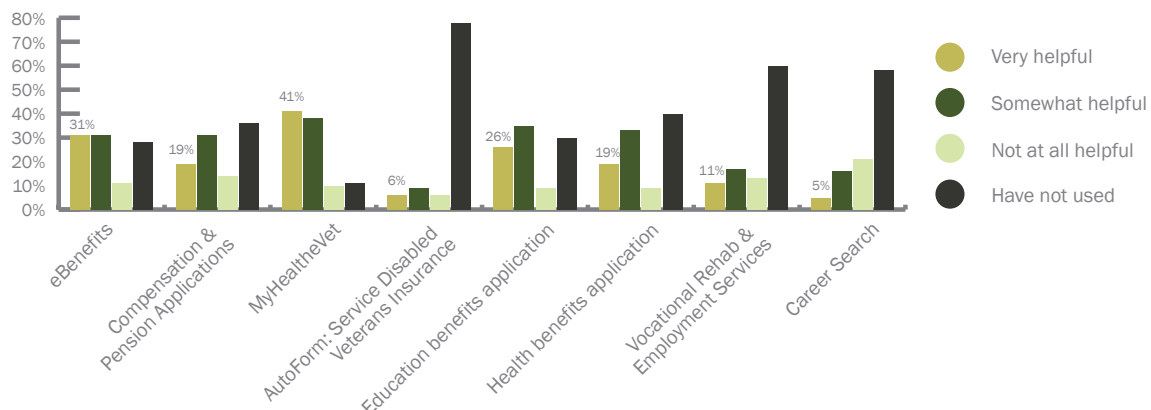
## RATING THE VA

**41% of respondents do not have a positive view of the VA**

**20% of respondents do not feel that the VA cares about them**



## How respondents who use VA Health Care rate the VA's Online Services





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VETERANS OF AMERICA

**WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK**

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