

Donald J. Trump delivers remarks at the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

Thank you all very much. What a privilege to be here with the incredible men and women of the VFW.

Spending time with our Veterans has been the greatest honor of this campaign.

I want to thank Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki for the warm welcome. My thanks as well to Bob Wallace ... Auxiliary President Francisca Guilford ... and your incoming leadership, Brian Duffy and Collette Bishop.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars represent the very best of America. When I am President I pledge to work closely with your organization and your members to accomplish our shared goals.

Our Veterans are the bravest and finest people on Earth.

The members of your organization have fought for the American Flag on distant battlefields across the world.

Your members have shed their blood and poured out their hearts for this nation.

Our debt to you is eternal.

Yet, our politicians have failed you. Our most basic commitment – to provide health and medical care to those who fought for us – has been violated completely.

The VA scandals that have occurred are widespread and inexcusable.

As we know, many have died waiting for care that never came – a permanent stain on this government.

Can you imagine the waste and corruption we'll find when we begin a full investigation in January of 2017?

I've recently released a detailed 10-step Veterans Reform plan, and we worked on the plan with the Chairman of the Veteran Affairs Committee in the House, Jeff Miller.

We are going to take care of our Veterans like they've never been taken care of before.

The other candidate in this race has a different view.

Hillary Clinton recently said of the VA scandal that "it's not been as widespread as it has been made out to be."

We know how she takes care of Veterans. Just look at her invasion of Libya and her handling of Benghazi. Or look at her emails, which put America's entire national security at risk.

We are going to bring honesty back to government, and that starts with fixing the VA.

Here is my ten-step plan for Veterans Reform:

One:

I will appoint a Secretary of Veterans Affairs who will make it their personal mission to clean up the VA.

Two:

I am going to use every lawful authority to remove and discipline federal employees or managers who breach the public trust.

Three:

I will ask Congress to pass a bill giving the VA Secretary full authority to remove or discipline any employee who risks the health, safety, or well-being of a veteran.

Four:

I will appoint a commission to investigate all the wrongdoing at the VA, and then present those findings to Congress as the basis for reforming the entire system.

Five:

I am going to make sure that honest and dedicated people in the VA have their jobs protected, and are put in line for promotions.

Six:

I will create a private White House Hotline – that is answered by a real person 24 hours a day – to make sure that no valid complaint about the VA ever falls through the cracks.

I will instruct my staff that if a valid complaint is not acted upon, then the issue be brought directly to me, and I will pick up the phone and fix it myself, if need be.

Seven:

Instead of giving bonuses to employees for wasting money, we are going to create a new incentives program that rewards employees for saving money and improving the quality of care.

Eight:

Our visa programs will be reformed to ensure that veterans are put in the front of the line for jobs in the country they fought to protect.

Nine:

We are going to increase the number of mental health care professionals, and increase mental health outreach to veterans outside of the system.

Ten:

We are going to ensure every veteran in America gets timely access to top-quality care, including the best care in the world for our female veterans.

The Veterans health system will remain a public system, because it is a public trust. But never again will we allow any veteran to suffer or die waiting for care.

That means Veterans will have the right to go to a VA facility, or the right to see a private doctor or clinic of their choice – whatever is fastest and best for the veteran.

Come January 20th, if I am elected president, you're going to notice a change – in the VA, and in the whole entire government. A change in attitude, and a change in results.

Government is going to start working for the people again.

The special interests opposing our reform agenda for America are the same people who have led us to one economic and foreign policy disaster after another.

The global corporations and media executives who oppose our plans for change want to keep the rigged system in place. That's because they rigged the system for their personal benefit.

That's why their message is that things can't change.

These are the same special interests who have driven the economy into the ground, and who have created one calamity after another overseas. These Washington interests are telling Americans to stay the course.

They are telling us that we can't fix our trade deals, or fix the VA, or fix our tax system, or fix our immigration system – because they are benefitting from the status quo.

My message is the opposite: things have to change, and they have to change right now.

Here is just some of the change we need:

We need to change our tax, energy and regulatory policies to produce millions of new jobs – and trillions in new wealth to invest in our country and our infrastructure.

Those who seek to raise taxes and expand regulation will only weaken our country, hamstringing our economy, and throw many millions more out of work.

Our immigration system must also be fixed so it lifts people out of poverty – instead of throwing them into poverty.

Our terrible trade deals must be renegotiated to keep jobs and wealth in America.

We need to change our foreign policy to focus on defeating and destroying ISIS.

It's also essential that we suspend the refugee flows from Syria and other dangerous countries, so we don't bring into the United States the same terrorism that our American soldiers are fighting overseas.

Our depleted military must be completely rebuilt.

Then, from a position of strength and respect, America needs to extend our hand in friendship to foreign nations who want to be our friends, and we will do so without letting them take advantage of us. We want a more peaceful future for our world. But peace will require new approaches – not relying on the same failed voices of the past.

And we need to fix the VA so we never, ever again break our sacred commitment to our Veterans.

We can do all of these things – we simply need to stop relying on the politicians who created these problems in the first place.

We can't fix a rigged system by electing the people who rigged it.

Let's reject the doubters and the cynics, and choose instead to believe in ourselves and our country.

It is time to follow the example of our amazing Veterans, who work together across racial lines, across income lines, across all lines – in unity of mission and purpose. Let them be our guide.

It is time to believe in each other, and it is time to believe in America.

If we do this, we will truly make America Great Again.

Thank you very much. God bless you.