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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** National Executive Committee  
DAV, Trust and Foundation Board of Directors  
National Interim Committee Members  
Department and Chapter Commanders and Adjutants  
State Commanders and Adjutants Association President and Secretary  
Auxiliary National Commander and Adjutant  
All Employees

**FROM:** J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant

**SUBJECT:** CBS News Reports

**DATE:** January 27, 2016

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Many of you have become aware of CBS news reports lambasting Wounded Warrior Project. In the first segment that aired last night, DAV Charitable Service Trust was named for its positive program service to administrative expenses ratio. Another segment aired this morning and another will likely air tonight. The media attention this issue is receiving will undoubtedly make it a topic of discussion. It may even lead to local media queries for chapters as reporters seek a local connection to a national story.

Foremost, while many of us have long felt that DAV's services are the most substantive among veterans service organizations, it is important that we respond with the honor and dignity that appropriately represents our cause. When it comes to talking about DAV's mission and the services we provide, we should all be prepared at any time to communicate with the public and media.

When the subject of these reports surfaces, I hope we take the high road and turn our focus to what DAV is doing to help veterans get the benefits they've earned, get them access to the care they deserve, help them transition to civilian life and find meaningful employment.

Saying negative things about other charities does not serve the best interests of our organization. Though many of us may have low opinions on the fiscal responsibility of certain entities or their focus, the current situation should not be used as a forum to criticize other organizations. In fact, it should serve as a reminder to us that our reputation is our greatest asset and we can expect even greater scrutiny over our management of donated dollars and more questions about the impact of our mission.

Fortunately, this is an area where DAV excels. We are transparent about how we manage our funds and know that, in terms of our mission, the impact of our services is unmatched in our charity sector. That we have chapters at the community level providing services and support is

one of our great assets. So is the fact that we represent the voices of nearly 1.3 million members throughout the nation.

If given the opportunity to speak to the media, as DAV representatives we should not bash or comment on the Wounded Warrior Project. However, we should be prepared to speak about what we do in our communities and the national impact of DAV.

That we help more than one million veterans annually in life-changing ways is important to communicate. That DAV represents more than 300,000 claims for veterans and their families every year and secured more than \$4 billion in new and retroactive benefits for them in 2015 is important for the public to know. That we provide more than 700,000 rides to get veterans to medical appointments annually is noteworthy. It's also worth mentioning that our employment program hosted more than 70 job fairs last year and that we are challenging employers through virtual career fairs to hire 10,000 disabled veterans by 2018.

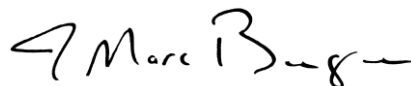
This may also be an opportunity to tell the public how they can become involved in our organization by volunteering locally in our transportation network or in hospitals – or through our Local Veterans Assistance Program, that recognizes unique volunteer initiatives based on the personal skills or interests of citizens who want to support veterans. You could also discuss activities your chapter may be doing within our chartered purpose to serve our heroes and their families.

Attached, please find talking points to help you further communicate these familiar subjects and others. We are not charity watch dogs and evaluating other organizations is not our specialty. But by talking about our mission, we may be able to help the public understand the value of our charity at a time when their trust in veterans service organizations may be on a sharp decline.

If you are approached by the media or need assistance with any queries you receive, please contact the Communications Department. Steve Wilson can be reached directly at (859) 442-2046 or at [swilson@dav.org](mailto:swilson@dav.org).

Please remember that you represent a sacred cause and more than 95 years of dedicated service to our nation's heroes. By taking the high road in how we respond at this time, we reflect the honor the public owes our cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Marc Burgess". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. MARC BURGESS

JMB:ajb