**SVA Organizational Talking Points**

• ***SVA IS DEDICATED TO HELPING YESTERDAY’S WARRIORS BECOME TODAY’S SCHOLARS AND TOMORROW’S LEADERS.***

Today’s veterans face tremendous obstacles in their path of attaining a college degree. These challenges range from a missing sense of camaraderie to a lack of understanding by university faculty and peers. When coupled with the visible and invisible wounds of war, a college degree seems to be an elusive goal for men and women returning from military service. SVA makes that goal a reality.

• Student Veterans of America focuses on preparing students, through programs like our Math Boot Camp, Leadership Institutes and our Local Leadership Summits. These programs equip student veterans with the knowledge and tools that which make them informed, not only while they are students, but also when they transition into the workforce.

• With a new generation of veterans transitioning back to civilian lives, these investments will empower student veterans to reach their higher education and career goals, particularly in high-demand fields like science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

• It’s important to encourage those utilizing the G.I. Bill to seek degrees with high economic value, such as STEM, from reputable institutions. This way, we ensure that not only will they be poised to enter these fields with high economic value upon graduating, but it also ensures a higher return on investment.

• Chartered in 2008 by 20 student veterans, SVA currently has over 1200 chapters with more than 440,000 members.

• There are 1.2 million veterans currently utilizing GI Bill Benifits

• By 2018, 63% of job openings will require workers with post-secondary education (BLS)

**General Organization Background**

**(This info has been provided to the journalist)**

**How long has Student Veterans of America been around? How did it come about? Who founded it?**

In 2008 Student Veterans of America was born out of the experiences of one young veteran returning to campus. When Derek Blumke returned to the University of Michigan, he was one of 48 veterans on a campus of 40,000.  Alone, he was confronted with questions such as *“Have you ever killed anyone?”* and a general population  that was not prepared to help veterans.  As he left the library one day, Derek saw a magazine cover that highlighted the struggles of other student veterans.  He was not alone. Immediately, he collaborated with Elizabeth O’Herrin of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Luke Stalcup of Columbia University to found **Student Veterans of America.**

The nation’s renewed focus on veteran welfare has ignited change on campuses and in congress.  SVA is committed to capitalizing on this momentum to ensure that today’s and tomorrow’s veterans are supported in their transition to education and employment.

**What is your main mission?**

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**How do you accomplish your mission?**

SVA ensures that young veterans are successful in their transition from the battlefield to the classroom by:

• Developing student veteran groups on campuses across the nation to create a network of resources, ideas, and support.

• Developing programs and policies to help veterans transition from combat to the classroom.

• Centralizing all resources that student veterans need to successfully graduate.

• Advocating on behalf of student veterans on the state and national level.

**What progress have you made toward your goal/mission?**

Since 2008,  over 1.2 million veterans have returned home to pursue a postsecondary degree or certificate using G.I Bill/VA education benefits.  To meet this need, SVA’s presence at the local and national levels has grown to include over 1,300 chapter affiliates and also includes numerous private and nonprofit partners and an expanding list of impactful programs and services for veterans.