

# VFW Pleased to See Veterans Return to the General Election

## The following is a message from VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt

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**WASHINGTON** — “Yesterday, Vice President Kamala Harris selected Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a 24-year retired enlisted Army National Guardsman, as her running mate for the 2024 presidential election. Last month, former President Donald Trump selected Ohio Sen. JD Vance, a former enlisted Marine and veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as his running mate. This means that regardless of the outcome in November, the next Vice President of the United States will be a former enlisted service member. I am pleased to see both major parties recognize that military service is once again a valued experience in choosing the candidate for the second highest position in the country.

Not since then-Sen. John Kerry challenged former President George W. Bush in the general election 20 years ago, have we had both major parties submit at least one veteran for their respective tickets, let alone two former enlisted service members. In fact, there has never been a US president whose military service was only within the enlisted ranks. Among the vice presidents, there were just three with only enlisted service – Walter Mondale, Dan Quayle and Al Gore.

After more than 30 years of our nation’s persistent involvement in conflicts overseas, the VFW believes it is critical that American voters hear from those who have served in the military to best understand the decisions our leaders must make when they send young Americans to war. With both vice presidential candidates having worn our nation’s uniform with enlisted rank insignia on their collars, the VFW is eager to hear how both campaigns intend to not only serve the needs of our active, Guard and Reserve service members as well as our veterans, but also ensure that America’s military remains poised to deter and defeat our adversaries in a dangerous world.

At a time of seemingly severe political division, our nation once again looks to our veterans to chart a way forward for our nation.

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We wish Sen. Vance and Gov. Walz the best in their campaigns for vice president and the VFW stands ready to offer our perspective on critical military and veterans' policies to help inform our nation's future leaders."