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# United States Senate

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March 4, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

It has come to our attention the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is considering a reduction in the spending limits on all VA purchasing cards to no more than \$1 at the request of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency. We have serious concerns these actions will impair critical daily operations across the entire Department and result in immediate and lasting impacts on veterans' timely access to safe and high-quality care. These cards are used by VA staff to purchase vital medical supplies and prosthetics. They are used to purchase gas for campus shuttles to transport disabled veterans to and from their medical appointments. They allow VA employees to travel across the country to oversee programs and ensure their proper execution on behalf of veterans and taxpayers. VA clinicians use them to visit homebound patients, and VA social workers use them to travel to homeless outreach programs. And any pauses or delays in access to the goods and services provided through these purchase cards could put veterans' lives at stake.

Despite the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, VA still relies on a "just-in-time" supply chain. Oftentimes, much-needed supplies do not arrive on time due to factors beyond anyone's control, and facilities are forced to purchase these items locally to ensure patient care is not interrupted. Moreover, of the up to 875 contracts you tried to cancel earlier this week, one relates specifically to managing inventory for VA's larger medical supply purchasing program. If VA's overall medical supply inventory is no longer being managed appropriately and facilities no longer have the option to buy supplies or services locally via functioning purchase cards, how will VA medical facilities remain operational? As one frustrated VA employee noted, even band-aids at the dollar store now cost more than a dollar.

For over a decade, Congress has been acutely aware of concerns surrounding the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse generated by purchasing cards. It has been the subject of numerous oversight hearings and reports from VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office. Due to these efforts, VA has taken considerable steps to improve the program's oversight and governance. As an added measure, the OIG continues to conduct an annual audit of the purchasing card program to review compliance with VA's internal controls.

Rather than continuing to sign off on every arbitrary and destructive idea from DOGE, we hope you will instead start meaningfully consulting with senior leaders across the agency to better understand the real-world consequences your actions have on this nation's veterans, their families, and their caregivers. We therefore urge you to put veterans first and withdraw from efforts to dismantle VA's purchasing card program.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Angus S. King, Jr  
United States Senator