



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON**

June 27, 2025

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the malicious, harmful, and false claims about recent updates to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center bylaws. These changes ensure compliance with White House executive orders and do not change VA's positions against discrimination in any form. All Federal laws and VA policies prohibiting discrimination, including on the basis of political affiliation or marital status, remain fully in effect. For reference:

- 5 U.S.C. § 2302 prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status or political affiliation; 5 U.S.C § 7102 governs union participation rights, including barring interference with those rights.
- Health care eligibility is based on 38 U.S.C. §§ 1710 and 1705 not on categories such as political affiliation or marital status.
- VHA Directive 1019, Nondiscrimination in Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted (External) Programs, governs all medical services VA provides and prohibits discrimination in the provision of services.

It is unfortunate that The Guardian misrepresented the facts. Major news organizations declined to cover the story because it did not meet editorial standards. Sensationalized headlines may drive clicks, but they mislead people, including Veterans. I ask for your help in rejecting this misinformation. Veterans deserve honesty, not fear.

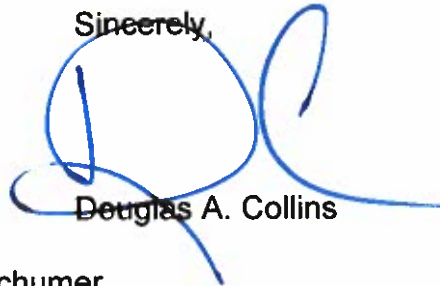
It is, however, even more concerning that, as Members of Congress, you have chosen to participate in the furtherance of these lies. I cannot understand what would motivate you to join in the false narrative that this harmful article perpetrates. The sad reality is that the pursuit of clicks and political points hides the real effect of this type of article.

The real-world effect of spreading these lies is that some Veterans may believe it and not seek the help they need, which could have tragic consequences. By continuing this lie, you are complicit in this result.

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal

I look forward to working with you, even if we disagree, but I cannot allow this issue to go unanswered. I wish you would understand the damage you are inflicting on Veterans by continuing a narrative you know to be untrue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Douglas A. Collins', with a large loop and a trailing line.

Douglas A. Collins

Cc: The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
The Honorable Margaret Wood Hassan  
The Honorable Mazie Hirono  
The Honorable Angus S. King, Jr.  
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
The Honorable Ruben Gallego  
The Honorable Elissa Slotkin  
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
The Honorable Adam B. Schiff  
The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet  
The Honorable Alex Padilla  
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
The Honorable Mark Kelly  
The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley  
The Honorable Gary C. Peters  
The Honorable Tim Kaine  
The Honorable John Fetterman  
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
The Honorable Angela Aslobrooks  
The Honorable Mark R. Warner