



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON**

May 14, 2025

The Honorable Mark Takano
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Takano:

Thank you for your March 6, 2025, co-signed letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding the March 4, 2025, memorandum about VA's Reduction in Force (RIF) and Reorganization Plan. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The VA is fully committed to ensuring all eligible Veterans receive the benefits they have earned, including those eligible for new or increased benefits under the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022. VA has made significant reductions the Disability Compensation claims backlog, which was over 260,000 items when President Trump took office. In addition, VA exempted over 300,000 VA employees working in mission critical positions from the hiring freeze to ensure hiring and service continue.

Further, VA supports the efforts of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), because every identified incidence of wasteful spending can be directed toward Veteran health care and benefits. All VA liaisons to DOGE are VA employees, follow applicable privacy laws and take mandatory training, and work to streamline operations, improve management, and examine contracts.

Finally, the VA continues to gather information related to the Agency RIF and Reorganization Plan (ARRP). The VA's goal is to increase efficiency and streamline operations to provide better, faster care for our Veterans. The ARRP team continues to go through a careful, deliberative analysis that includes both political appointees and career senior leadership. There are no decisions on cuts or timelines, except that all actions must ensure there are no negative impacts on health care and benefits. The VA has also provided briefings on this topic to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee staffs.

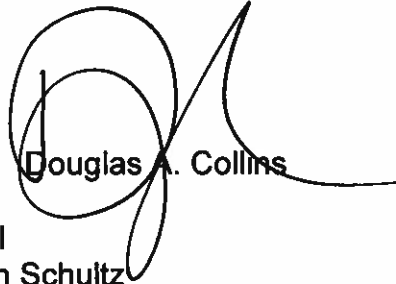
My commitment to Veterans and the VA is steadfast. Everything I do is to ensure Veterans receive the care and services they deserve and to instill a lasting culture of caring, customer service, and accountability that always puts Veterans first.

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The Honorable Mark Takano

The other signatories of your letter have received a courtesy copy of this response. Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Collins

Cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Julia Brownley
The Honorable Bernard Sanders
The Honorable Chris Pappas
The Honorable Mazie Hirono
The Honorable Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
The Honorable Maragaret Wood Hassan
The Honorable Morgan McGarvey
The Honorable Angus K. King, Jr.
The Honorable Delia C. Ramirez
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
The Honorable Nikki Budzinski
The Honorable Ruben Gallego
The Honorable Timothy M. Kennedy
The Honorable Elissa Slotkin
The Honorable Maxine Dexter
The Honorable Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
The Honorable Kelly Morrison