

JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
CHAIRMAN
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS
BILL CASSIDY, LOUISIANA
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
KEVIN CRAMER, NORTH DAKOTA
TOMMY TUBERVILLE, ALABAMA
JIM BANKS, INDIANA
TIM SHEEHY, MONTANA
DAVID SHEARMAN, STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
RANKING MEMBER
PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII
MAGGIE HASSAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ANGUS S. KING, JR., MAINE
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
RUBEN GALLEGO, ARIZONA
ELISSA SLOTKIN, MICHIGAN

TONY McCLAIN, STAFF DIRECTOR

June 13, 2025

The Honorable David Case
Acting Inspector General
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Acting Inspector General Case,

We write to request the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiate a review of the mass cancellation of VA contracts launched by the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Secretary Collins, and other officials of the Department and the impact of these actions on veterans and VA operations. These activities began soon after January 20 and are ongoing.

Since February of this year, Committee Minority staff have investigated these activities using public government contracting databases, internal VA documents, conducting interviews with VA employees and contractors, and other methods.

The preliminary findings after analyzing more than 650 VA contracts “terminated for convenience” between January 20 and May 30, 2025, extracted from federal contracting databases, are that a majority appear to be for services directly for veterans or critical VA operations to include for safe health care delivery. They include more than two dozen for medical supplies and equipment; four for cancer and tumor registries; more than 110 for construction and infrastructure services to include maintenance of boilers; prosthetics, including the conversion of a van for a veteran; more than 15 nursing home care contracts; more than 150 dealing with a wide range of quality of care, medical oversight, and hospital accreditation preparedness services; PACT Act implementation; and more. These are all areas that have been the subject of hundreds of OIG reports and investigations and known to be matters in which VA needs more support, not less. In addition, to date, no evidence has been provided by VA that any thoughtful contingency planning was put into place before these services were cancelled. Compounding our concerns are the hiring freeze, deferred resignations, terminations, and planned mass reductions of VA’s workforce that in theory is responsible for absorbing some of this work.

To add to these alarming facts, recent media investigations, to include two stories released by *ProPublica* on June 6, have found evidence that DOGE and VA officials used ill-conceived Artificial Intelligence (AI) formulas and algorithms to make or inform contract cancellation decisions—cutting out meaningful input from VA career experts to assess the impact of ending these services. This adds an entire new level of unease connected to the decision-making, security, governance, and quality control of the entire process.

As way of background, on February 24 and 25, 2025, Secretary Collins announced on social media his plan, carried out with Elon Musk and DOGE, to cancel hundreds of VA contracts he claimed were for “PowerPoint slides and meeting minutes” and indicated were valued at \$2 billion. After directing career officials in the Department to start the cancellations, a list of more than 870 contracts was leaked to Congress and the media. The reality was that these contracts were predominantly for direct services for veterans or supporting VA operations including: suicide prevention and mental health treatment; disability claims processing, exams and auditing; radiology services; outreach regarding burial benefits and health care services; and contracts to conduct oversight activities to identify and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

When the true content of mass contract cancellations was exposed, VA’s leadership team directed career officials to pause some cancellations. Public records show some contracts previously cancelled at the Secretary’s direction were then reversed while others remain cancelled and new contracts are being cancelled each week. On March 3, 2025, VA announced that instead of more than 870 contracts, it would cancel 585 contracts with an alleged value of \$1.8 billion but provided no details. This has been a consistent pattern and problem. Despite repeated requests in letters to the Secretary, questions at hearings, and dozens of emails to VA officials, as of the date of this letter, the Department has not provided a single briefing or a complete and accurate list of the contracts it has cancelled, descoped, modified, or otherwise changed as part of this process or the underlying methodology, reasoning, and contingency planning. On May 16, VA provided Congress with a list of more than 445 contracts which it indicated were “terminated and closed.” This list was so riddled with errors and inaccuracies to call into question the veracity of the entire document.

Since the beginning of this process, Secretary Collins and VA officials have repeatedly denied—without supporting evidence—that the cancellations will negatively affect veterans or VA operations, including saying:

- “[t]he termination of these contracts will not negatively affect Veteran care, benefits or services, and will help VA better focus on its core mission: providing the best possible care and services to Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors”, *VA Press Release, March 3, 2025*;
- “as part of its review, VA career subject-matter expert employees responsible for the contract cancellations were given the option to stop a cancellation if they felt it would negatively impact health care, benefits or services for Veterans or VA beneficiaries”, *VA Press Release, March 3, 2025*;
- “VA will not cancel contracts for work that provides services to veterans or that the agency cannot do itself without a contingency plan in place”, *VA Spokesperson, “DOGE Developed Error-Prone AI Tool to “Munch” Veterans Affairs Contracts,” ProPublica, June 6, 2025*; and
- “[c]ontracts that directly support Veterans, beneficiaries or provide services VA cannot do itself, such as a nurse who sees patients or an organization that provides third-party certification services, respectively, were not canceled. Contracts that involved services VA has the ability to perform itself were typically canceled”, *Secretary Collins, letter to Congress, May 2, 2025*.

Based on these findings and information, we ask VA OIG to conduct a review of these matters which may include a focus on:

- the impact of these cancellations on veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors health care, benefits, memorial affairs and related services;
- the impact of these cancellations on VA operations such as quality of care oversight, patient safety, accreditation, medical supplies and equipment, IT security, research, construction and maintenance;
- the use of AI and/or algorithms to guide decision-making to include the recipient and purpose each VA contract identified by DOGE VA employee Mr. Sahil Lavingia that has been terminated; the formal assignment and instructions given to Mr. Lavingia with respect to assessment of VA contracts to include whether they included the use of AI and the approval of relevant code; the data integrity and protection measures taken, if any, to ensure the safeguarding of any personally identifiable information; and the extent to which this and any other related use of AI by DOGE or the VA violated any policy, procedure, regulation, or statute;
- the extent, timing, and substantive involvement, if any, of VA career subject matter experts in the decision-making regarding cancellations;
- the existence of contingency plans to replace the services prior to contract cancellations;
- an identification of the contracts cancelled, descoped, stopped or allowed to expire at part of this mass cancellation effort;
- the financial transfer of funding from cancelled contracts to other VA activities; and
- other relevant matters as determined by VA OIG.

We firmly support VA efforts to regularly review services procured by the Department and that process should be built into any functioning acquisition and program management operation at VA. However, this process, which included cancelling hundreds of contracts, many in a several-day period, then restoring dozens just a few days later, is not an indication of good program management but rather waste, carelessness, and chaos. We are deeply concerned about how these cancellations, which are ongoing, are or will impact veterans' health care, benefits, and other services; harm VA's ability to perform oversight and program improvement; and eliminate or significantly hinder the availability of critical tools to maintain safe and clean facilities.

A non-partisan and independent review of these matters is critical. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs