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May 3, 2025

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write to request information about the recently organized task force to analyze anti-Christian bias at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to ensuring that VA remains an institution that upholds the constitutional rights and protections of every veteran and employee – including the right to religious freedom.

To preserve this right to religious freedom, the Department cannot prioritize one faith over others, nor can it allow religious considerations to shape its policies in ways that may conflict with the First Amendment. Further, the vagueness of the task force's mission raises significant concerns about how it will be used and whether it is compatible with the mission of the Department.

The examples of "anti-Christian bias" provided in your all staff bulletin raise questions on which sect of Christianity that you intend to devote effort to. For example, your bulletin requests information for any retaliatory actions taken or threatened in response from refusing certain healthcare procedures, like abortions. Some sects of Christianity, like the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Lutheran Church, support abortion rights. Insinuating that this task force would only review biases against those who do not support the right to abortion implies a limited view of Christianity.

I hope we share a common goal in ensuring that all veterans – regardless of where, how, or if they choose to express their beliefs – have access to the world-class healthcare and services that VA offers. To this end, we request responses to the following questions by **Friday, May 23, 2025:**

1. Please provide a complete and unredacted list of the VA employees are currently involved in the anti-Christian bias task force launched by the Secretary on Monday, April

21, 2025. In this list, please include the names of involved employees, their positions and offices within the Department, their roles within the task force, and how they were selected (or vetted) to join the task force. As additional employees are added to this task force, please update this response accordingly.

- a. If employees were not identified and instead joined the task force on a voluntary basis, please provide the communications sent to Departmental employees advertising the task force.
2. Please provide complete and unredacted copies of any formal or informal delegation documents that dictated roles and responsibilities, goals, reporting requirements, or other duties that the task force may perform.
 - a. How has the Department defined “anti-Christian bias” and “Christian views,” as detailed in the examples provided in the all-staff bulletin sent by the Secretary? Please provide those definitions.
 - b. What resources, financial or otherwise, are being provided to the task force?
 - c. What guidance or directives did the Department receive from the Trump Administration regarding the organization of this task force? Please provide complete and unredacted copies of these documents.
3. Please provide complete and redacted copies of all data, reports, complaints, or analyses in the Department’s possession that document incidents of anti-Christian bias within VA facilities, programs, or offices. Please indicate the timeframe covered by the data collection; differentiate between complaints filed by employees, veterans, contractors, or members of the public; and identify whether these complaints were substantiated, unsubstantiated, or are still under review.
 - a. How many Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints have been filed with the Department over the past five years that alleged religious discrimination based on Christianity?
 - i. How many of these complaints resulted in findings of discrimination?
 - ii. How many are pending, and how many were dismissed without findings?
4. What is the process for reviewing submissions made to the task force? Have individuals on the task force been provided investigative authority to review and investigate submissions, or the task force be recommending certain cases for investigation by other entities?
 - a. If the task force has been provided investigative authority, are these individuals authorized to recommend discipline to the Secretary?
 - b. If the task force is referring cases for further investigation by other entities, what criteria are these individuals using to determine if anti-Christian bias had occurred, and where are these cases being referred?

5. Will this task force's recommendations and actions influence hiring practices, chaplain services, display of religious symbols, or other institutional decisions within VA facilities? If so, please explain.
6. What discipline or consequences are being considered for those individuals found to be engaging in "anti-Christian bias"? Are there appeal avenues accessible for those that
7. Will the task force be examining allegations of anti-Christian bias by veterans or the public, or will it be solely focused on the actions of VA employees?
8. What outreach has the Department received from veterans requesting the establishment of this task force?
9. How will the VA-specific task force collaborate with the government-wide task force led by Attorney General Pam Bondi?
10. Does the Department plan to assess any kind of bias, discrimination, or retaliation against other protected religious groups or other protected classes?
11. Is the task force work meant to be prospective, or will there be a retrospective review as well? If retrospective, what is the proposed time period for review?
12. Has the Office of General Counsel (OGC) or any other relevant VA office provided legal or advisory analysis about the establishment of the task force, particularly regarding its consistency with constitutional protections against religious establishment and equal protection principles? If so, please provide copies of that analysis.

I also request that the Department share any meeting minutes, internal memos, policy drafts, and current or future reports that the task force may produce in accordance to its designated responsibilities.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, you may contact Ms. Kassie Stagner (Kassie.Stagner@mail.house.gov) with the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Veterans' Affairs Committee