

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 28, 2025

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write in strong opposition to your decision to rescind Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 1341(4), “Providing Health Care for Transgender and Intersex Veterans”¹ and to phase out medically necessary care for transgender veterans.²

Transgender veterans, like all veterans, have served our nation with honor and deserve access to medically necessary care in a culturally competent and affirming setting. On February 8, 2013, the Veterans Health Administration issued VHA Directive 2013-003, *Providing Health Care for Transgender and Intersex Veterans*, in order to ensure transgender and intersex veterans receive care in clinically appropriate and affirming settings.³ This directive was replaced and updated during the first Trump Administration with VHA Directive 1341, *Providing Health Care for Transgender and Intersex Veterans*, which was then updated several times in the following years. This directive, as amended, ensured “the respectful delivery of health care to transgender and intersex veterans who are enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system or are otherwise eligible for VA care,” including by requiring VHA staff to use veterans’ preferred names and pronouns and requiring staff to “provide clinically appropriate, comprehensive, Veteran-centered care with respect and dignity to enrolled or otherwise eligible transgender and intersex Veterans.”⁴

Your decision to rescind this directive was just the latest action by President Trump and VA to end support for transgender veterans. Since President Trump took office, VA facilities have

¹ VHA Notice 2025-01, *Rescission of VHA Directive 1341(4), Providing Health Care For Transgender And Intersex Veterans*, Dep’t of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Admin. (Mar. 14, 2025), <https://equality.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/equality.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/1341%284%29-recission-memo-vha.pdf> [hereinafter “VHA Mar. 14 Recission Memo”].

² *VA to phase out treatment for gender dysphoria (Press Release)*, U.S. Dep’t of Veterans Affairs (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-to-phase-out-treatment-for-gender-dysphoria/> [hereinafter “VA Press Release”].

³ VHA Directive 2013-003, *Providing Health Care For Transgender And Intersex Veterans*, Dep’t of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Admin. (Feb. 8, 2013), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/VHAHealthcareDirective_2013.pdf/.

⁴ VHA Directive 1341(4), *Providing Health Care For Transgender And Intersex Veterans*, Dep’t of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Admin. (May 23, 2018; amended Aug. 19, 2024), https://equality.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/equality.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/1341%284%29_d_2018-05-23.pdf.

stopped allowing transgender veterans to access single-sex facilities, including restrooms, consistent with their gender identity, VA employees have been told to remove transgender-affirming materials, and there have been reports of veteran health records being updated to remove patients' gender identity.⁵ Even small symbols of support—like displaying pride flags—have been banned by this Administration.⁶ These actions intentionally create an environment that is unnecessarily hostile toward transgender veterans, which will undermine efforts to provide these veterans with the services and care they need.

To make matters worse, although the original memo rescinding VHA Directive 1341(4) and its accompanying Q&A stated “health care delivery for Veterans, including trans-identifying Veterans, is currently unchanged” and that “changes to healthcare delivery in VHA occur through a rulemaking process [and] [a]s such, health care services to Veterans will remain unchanged until and unless a rulemaking process is completed,”⁷ just three days later you announced VA would be phasing out treatments for gender dysphoria.⁸ Although your announcement included a limited exception for gender-affirming hormone therapy for veterans already receiving such care either through VA or by the military as part of and upon their separation, the announcement made clear that “VA will not provide any other medical or surgical therapy for gender dysphoria to any patients in any circumstance.”⁹ Apparently, recognizing this contradicted the memo rescinding VHA Directive 1341(4), VHA then issued a revised version of the memo rescinding VHA Directive 1341(4), adding language about these new restrictions, removing references to rulemaking and the rescission not affecting existing health care services, and removing the Q&A portion.¹⁰

Medical care to treat gender dysphoria is supported by every major medical association in the United States.¹¹ Your decision to end this care—even when a provider deems it medically necessary—is an affront to transgender veterans. You claimed, “all eligible Veterans – including trans-identified Veterans – will always be welcome at VA,”¹² but your actions speak louder than

⁵ Jo Yurcaba, *Trump's executive orders cause 'chaos' at the VA, some staffers say*, NBC NEWS (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-politics-and-policy/trumps-executive-orders-cause-chaos-va-staffers-say-rcna192045>.

⁶ Leo Shane III, *LGBTQ Pride flags banned at VA facilities under new policy*, MILITARY TIMES (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2025/02/13/lgbtq-pride-flags-banned-at-va-facilities-under-new-policy/>.

⁷ VHA Mar. 14 Recission Memo, *supra* n. 1.

⁸ VA Press Release, *supra* n. 2.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *VHA Notice 2025-01(1), Rescission of VHA Directive 1341(4), Providing Health Care For Transgender And Intersex Veterans*, Dep't of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Admin. (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://equality.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/equality.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/vha-1341%284%29-rescission-3.17.15.pdf>.

¹¹ *See, e.g., Medical Association Statements in Support of Health Care for Transgender People and Youth*, GLAAD (June 26, 2024), <https://glaad.org/medical-association-statements-supporting-trans-youth-healthcare-and-against-discriminatory/>.

¹² VA Press Release, *supra* n. 2.

these words, and you have done nearly everything you can to ensure VA is *not* a welcoming place for transgender veterans.

Your decision to pit veterans against each other by stating that “all savings from this change will go to helping paralyzed Veterans and amputees”¹³ is also shameful. Your position requires you to support all veterans, regardless of their identity or medical needs. Your attempt to portray cutting off medical care to some veterans as an action to support other veterans is especially hypocritical, after VA has attempted to fire thousands of employees, many of them veterans themselves, that support the needs of *all* members of the veteran community.

We implore you to immediately reinstate VHA Directive 1341(4) and reverse your decision to end treatments for gender dysphoria.

In addition, we also request that you provide answers to the following questions:

1. How much did VHA spend on medical care in 2024?
2. How many veterans were treated for gender dysphoria by VHA in 2024?
3. How much did VHA spend on medical treatments for gender dysphoria in 2024?
4. How much did VHA spend on pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical treatments for erectile dysfunction conditions in 2024?
5. How much did VHA spend on hormone treatments in 2024? Please disaggregate this by treatments for gender dysphoria and treatments for other conditions, such as menopause.
6. What major medical association guidelines did VA consult before deciding to phase out medical treatments for gender dysphoria?
7. How many medical providers did VA consult before:
 - a. Deciding to rescind VHA Directive 1341(4)?
 - b. Deciding to phase out medical treatments for gender dysphoria?
8. What changed between the Friday, March 14, memo where VHA thought it would have to go through rulemaking to restrict medical care offered to trans veterans and the Monday, March 17, announcement that VA would be restricting this care without rulemaking? *Please provide unredacted copies of all communications and documents relating to both of these decision-making processes, including any internal legal analyses supporting the March 14 position and the March 17 position.*
9. How are VHA providers expected to provide ethical, culturally competent medical care for transgender veterans without a record of veterans’ gender identity?
10. How is VA enforcing its ban on transgender people using single-sex facilities, including restrooms, that correspond with their gender identity?

¹³ *Id.*

- a. Are staff being assigned to monitor who accesses each facility?
 - b. Are decisions being made based on people's identification documents or invasive exams of their anatomy?
 - c. How is VA ensuring veterans are being protected from harassment because they do not fit stereotypical expectations of what people of their sex should look like?
11. What limitations or changes are being made to mental health treatment protocols related to transgender or intersex veterans?
 12. What additional resources is VA investing in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of transgender veterans, given VA's actions to undermine the care they receive will undoubtedly negatively affect these veterans' mental health?
 13. What additional steps and investments is VA taking to provide additional suicide prevention and mental health resources for transgender and intersex veterans in response to the hostile environment that you and the Trump Administration are subjecting them to?

We would appreciate receiving written responses to the above questions no later than Monday, April 3, 2025. Should you have any questions about this request, you may contact Mr. Jordan Dashow (Jordan.Dashow@mail.house.gov) and Ms. Alexis MacDonald (Alexis.MacDonald@mail.house.gov).

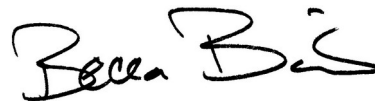
Sincerely,



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



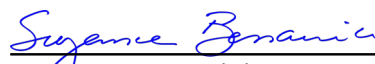
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



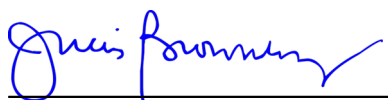
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



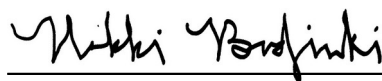
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



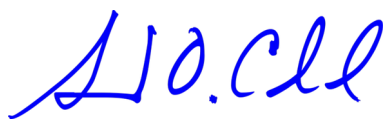
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



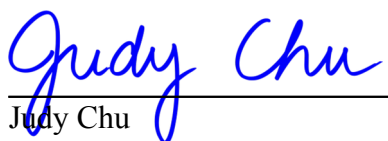
André Carson
Member of Congress



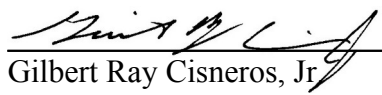
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



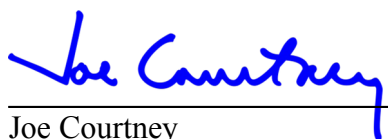
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



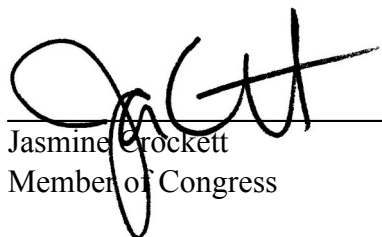
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress




Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress




Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



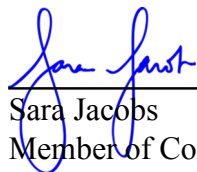
Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



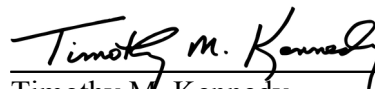
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



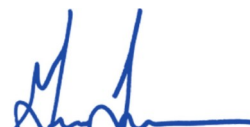
Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



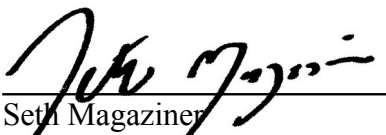
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress




Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



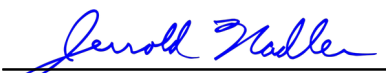
Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



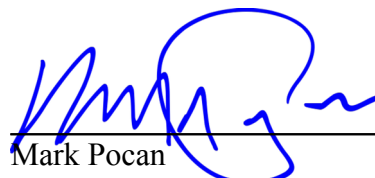
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



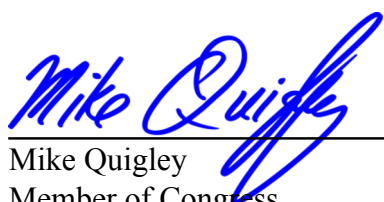
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



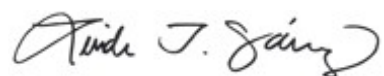
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



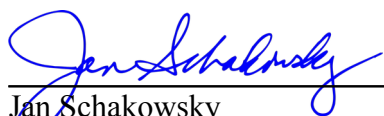
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



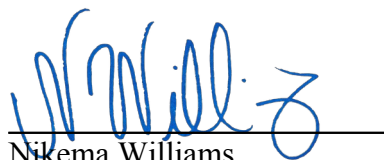
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress