

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

January 23, 2025

Todd Hunter
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Hunter:

Immediately upon taking office on January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) freezing all hiring across the executive branch, including at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Unsurprisingly, the Trump Administration reopened the same old playbook with regard to its plans to erode our civil institutions by attacking civil servants, but what is disappointing is that it was done without any regard for the harmful effects it would have on veterans and their access to care and benefits. At his confirmation hearing, Congressman Doug Collins did not have answers about how the federal hiring freeze ordered by President Trump will impact veterans receiving benefits and their healthcare at VA, so we write to you to request this information since you are charged with implementing these EOs.

We have reviewed the EO authorizing the hiring freeze, along with your "Hiring Freeze Guidance" Memorandum to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, dated January 21, 2025. However, we have numerous questions about the immediate and ongoing effects of these actions.

We request VA provide answers to the following questions and ensure the Committee is fully briefed on implementation of this, and other EOs issued by President Trump on January 20, 2025:

1. Please provide complete and unredacted copies of all guidance and memoranda issued to VA leadership and/or staff regarding the hiring freeze.
2. Is VA subject to the hiring freeze ordered by President Trump on January 20, 2025? Does the hiring freeze apply to all positions at VA, including those in the Veterans Health

Administration (clinical and non-clinical, including trainees), Veterans Benefits Administration, National Cemetery Administration, and the Board of Veterans Appeals? If not, which occupations are exempt?

3. Will all current and future vacant positions determined to fall within the public safety exemption remain open on USAJOBS.gov until the position is filled, regardless of geographic location?
4. Will hiring for vacant positions that are determined to fall within the public safety exemption require additional approvals and/or justification before the hiring process can begin? If so, whose approval is required?
5. Will VA request further exemptions from the hiring freeze from the Office of Personnel Management? If so, what will be the nature of those exemption requests and for what occupation(s) will VA request exemption(s)?
6. Please provide a comprehensive list of all job offers that have already been or will be rescinded due to the hiring freeze, including the date of rescission, job title, grade level and pay band, and location. Please specify how many of these job offers were made to candidates who are veterans or disabled veterans being hired under a hiring preference. How many job offers were rescinded for existing VA employees seeking new positions in the Department?
7. How does VA interpret the edict in the President's Hiring Freeze EO stating "Moreover, nothing in this memorandum shall adversely impact the provision of Veterans' benefits." Which VA functions are covered by this exemption, and which are not? Please provide any and all documentation to support this interpretation.

We ask that you respond to these questions no later than **February 7, 2025**. Additionally, we request that you provide a briefing to Committee staff no later than **February 11, 2025**. Should you have any questions about this request, you may contact Ms. Ally Cimino (Ally.Cimino@mail.house.gov) with the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. Thank you for your review and response to these concerns.

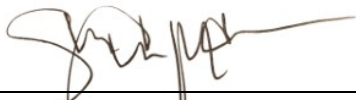
Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Ranking Member



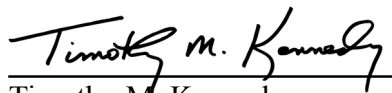
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



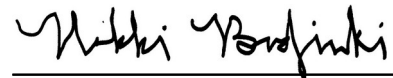
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Mike Bost, Chairman