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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
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[HTTP://VETERANS.HOUSE.GOV](http://veterans.house.gov)

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September 9, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Collins,

We are deeply concerned by reports that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has broadly rescinded previously approved reasonable accommodations that include telework flexibilities and denied new accommodation requests for employees with disabilities, including disabled veterans. Multiple accounts from frontline employees describe troubling patterns of rescissions, denials, or being forced to accept purported “effective alternatives” for reasonable accommodations. These accounts raise serious questions about whether VA is consistently applying the individualized and effective-accommodation standards required by Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, VA policy, and applicable collective bargaining agreements.¹ Multiple labor unions filed grievances against VA for repudiating collective bargaining obligations.

The Trump administration’s January 20, 2025, Return to Office (RTO) Memorandum directed agencies to return employees to full-time in-person work “consistent with applicable law” and allowed exemptions as necessary.² Guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and revised government telework/remote work materials further underscored that Rehabilitation Act obligations were to remain fully in force, and agencies may not apply blanket rules that effectively nullify Section 501 duties.³

¹ 29 U.S.C. 791 (2026).

² Return to In-Person Work, 90 Fed. Reg. 8251 (January 20, 2025).

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/28/2025-01907/return-to-in-person-work>

³ U.S. Off. of Pers. Mgmt., Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government, at 4 (2025) [here in after OPM Telework Guide]. <https://www.opm.gov/telework/documents-for-telework/2025-guide-to-telework-and->

Despite this guidance, the Committee continues to hear cases of veteran employees who were previously approved for telework accommodations, including those with service-connected mobility impairments, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and epilepsy, as well as immuno-compromised employees and even those receiving home health aide services through VA now being required to commute to a duty station. In some instances, employees have been assigned to ad hoc off-site locations that are not their official duty station, despite having no in-person trainings or meetings scheduled, effectively keeping them remote while imposing the burden and health risks of commuting.⁴

On February 5, 2026, VA Deputy Secretary Paul Lawrence, issued a memo providing guidance related to reasonable accommodations for supervisors, noting that “[t]he Department is not required to provide an employee with their preferred or first-choice accommodation and may provide alternative accommodation(s) if they are effective.”⁵ Yet, employees report losing telework reasonable accommodations and receiving uniform onsite “alternatives,” such as breaks, dark and quiet rooms, and ergonomic chairs that do not address their functional limitations.

This questionable legal guidance has already resulted in costly settlements, declining morale, and significant staffing shortages for the Department. In at least one case, an employee who was terminated for failing to comply with their rescinded telework accommodation was reinstated with backpay via Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) settlement. Our offices have also heard from numerous former employees who would have otherwise stayed at the Department but had no other chance than to leave federal service due to the lack of accommodations for their disabilities.

Beyond legal compliance, the impact of telework on mission performance is measurable. Numerous oversight agencies, to include the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and VA’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG), have urged agencies to evaluate the effects of working from home on service delivery, recruitment/retention, and performance rather than

[remote-work.pdf](#); U.S. Off. of Pers. Mgmt., Memorandum to Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies, OPM, Guidance on Presidential Memorandum Return to In-Person Work, (Dec. 31, 2025). <https://www.opm.gov/chcoc/latest-memos/2025-guide-to-telework-and-remote-work-in-the-federal-government.pdf>; U.S. Off. of Pers. Mgmt., Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers, OPM Memorandum No. CPM 2025-24, Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government (Dec. 31, 2025). <https://www.opm.gov/chcoc/latest-memos/2025-guide-to-telework-and-remote-work-in-the-federal-government.pdf>; *Supra* note 2.

⁴ Friedman, Drew, After returning to the office, federal employees report low productivity, morale, Federal News Network, (accessed 7/16/2026), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2026/07/after-returning-to-the-office-federal-employees-report-low-productivity-morale/>

⁵ U.S. Dep’t of Vet. Affs., Memorandum to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, Reasonable Accommodation Guidance for Supervisors-Deadline Extended, (February 5, 2026) (on file with author).

prematurely.⁶ VA should demonstrate that any reasonable accommodation changes comport with GAO's recommendations and do not impair case throughput or timeliness.

Considering the widespread and significant impact of these issues on VA employees, particularly those who are disabled veterans, we request responses to the following questions by **September 22, 2026**:

1. As of January 20, 2025, how many VA employees had approved reasonable accommodations that included telework? How many of these employees were service-connected disabled veterans? Please provide the data related to this question broken down by occupation.
 - a. Since the administration's return-to-office guidance was issued on January 20, 2025, how many telework reasonable accommodation requests has the Department reviewed? Please provide the data related to this question broken down by occupation.
 - b. How many of the total reasonable accommodations were terminated by VA? How many reasonable accommodations for veterans with service-connected disabilities were terminated by VA? What alternative accommodations were offered to these employees? Please provide the data related to this question broken down by occupation.
 - c. How many reasonable accommodations are still under review? Please provide the data related to this question broken down by occupation.
2. What is the process that VA undergoes to review telework accommodation requests and engage in the interactive process to consider alternative accommodations? In this response, please information and unredacted documents detailing the role and authorities of supervisors and District Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (DRACs), which may include training curricula, legal opinions or memoranda, and other records.
 - a. How often are DRAC recommendations for telework accepted, modified, or rejected by supervisors or other approving authorities? Please provide a breakdown by administration, home facility or duty station, current work location, and occupation series.
3. What documents, justifications, or other information are provided to employees in cases where their telework reasonable accommodation has been denied or rescinded? Please

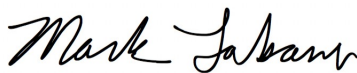
⁶ U.S. Gov't Accountability Off., GAO-25-106316, Selected Agencies Need to Evaluate the Potential Effects on Agency Performance, (2024), at 41. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-25-106316.pdf>; U.S. Dep't of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, VAOIG-25-03881-160, Review of Radiology Staffing and Services at the VA Washington DC Healthcare System, (2026). <https://www.vaoig.gov/reports/hotline-healthcare-inspection/review-radiology-staffing-and-services-va-washington-dc>

provide examples of any documents, rationales, or communications provided to employees during the review and decision of reasonable accommodations.

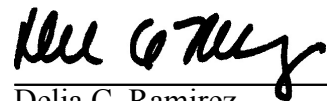
4. What criteria does VA use to determine that alternative reasonable accommodations offered are equally effective in enabling an individual's essential functions?
5. Where facility space constraints existed, what assessments of and/or exceptions to the return-to-office mandate did VA allow as it pertained to telework agreements and reasonable accommodations?

Given that VA employs more than 105,000 veterans, we expect VA to ensure that decisions regarding telework as reasonable accommodation do not disproportionately burden veterans, particularly those with service-connected disabilities. We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ally Cimino, Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, at Ally.Cimino@mail.house.gov.

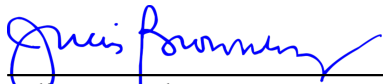
Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Veterans' Affairs



Delia C. Ramirez
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight
& Investigations



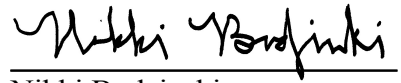
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



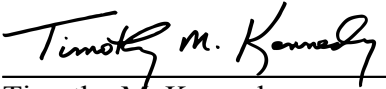
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Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
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