THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

October 27, 2025

The Honorable Timothy M. Kennedy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kennedy:

Thank you for your August 5, 2025, letter regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) workforce.

Since my nomination hearing, I have consistently praised the exceptional work our staff performs each day on behalf of the Nation's Veterans. Following a comprehensive review of our workforce, it became clear that VA was overstaffed in certain areas, with Veterans underserved and critical needs unmet. To address this imbalance, I implemented a series of voluntary measures—such as hiring freezes, the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), and the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) that were aligned in overstaffed areas. These measures allowed us to right-size our workforce without resorting to a large-scale reduction in force.

Importantly, these adjustments have not affected Veterans' care or benefits. More than 300,000 employees were in occupations that were exempt from DRP and VERA, and as a result, Veterans have continued to receive timely, high-quality services. These reforms have contributed to a 43% reduction in the claims backlog and meaningful progress toward implementing the electronic health record system.

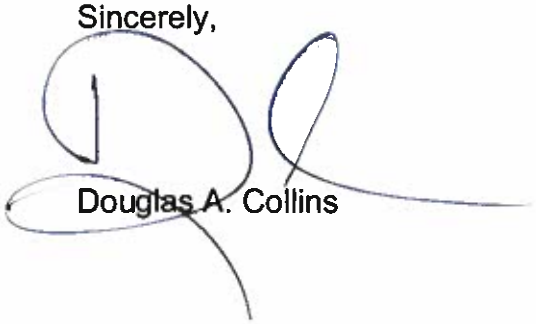
The Department remains committed to transparency with Congress throughout this process. VA has held three update briefings with staff from the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs and House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies on our workforce efforts and progress, and these briefings will continue as needed.

At present, VA is completing necessary realignments and is in the process of completing detailed organizational charts and unit manning documents, something that has been highlighted as a deficiency by Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and the VA Office of Inspector General for many years. I anticipate this information will be available and provided to Congress in a matter of weeks. I appreciate your patience as we work to ensure an open and transparent VA that is committed to the Veterans we serve.

The Honorable Kennedy

Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Collins