Support Accountability and Efficiency in the Federal Government

Organizations in Support: Americans for Prosperity, The R Street Institute, Americans for Tax Reform, Citizens Against Government Waste, National Taxpayers Union, FreedomWorks

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to sign our letter to all heads of federal executive and independent agencies highlighting the bipartisan Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-41), which was recently signed into law by President Donald J. Trump, and the government efficiency reforms it could bring to the broader executive branch.

For too long, the Department of Veterans Affairs has stood out as a glaring example of what can go wrong in a behemoth federal bureaucracy. Lengthy wait times for veterans seeking care, construction cost overruns, employee fraud and neglect – the list can go on. With over 300,000 VA employees, numerous facilities in varying stages of repair, and an access to care crisis for veterans, the issues facing the VA seemed almost too vast and too daunting to overcome.

However, the passage of the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act created a new, streamlined and efficient process to remove, demote, or suspend any VA employee – or executive – for poor performance or misconduct, and increased whistleblower protections for VA employees. Secretary Shulkin has already effectively utilized these authorities to remove hundreds of poor-performing employees.

This letter will provide all heads of federal executive and independent agencies with an opportunity for government reform within their own agencies and departments and ask for their recommendations on similar legislation, which will in turn help Congress in future government efficiency and accountability reform priorities. For questions, or to sign on, please contact Ryan Dierker in Rep. Brad Wenstrup’s office at ryan.dierker@mail.house.gov or x64464, or Aubrey Neal in Rep. Barry Loudermilk’s office at aubrey.neal@mail.house.gov or x68726.

Sincerely,

Brad R. Wenstrup
Member of Congress

Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress
Dear Secretaries, Administrators, Directors and Commissioners:

Thank you for your service to our nation. As our country grapples with ever-increasing debt and the fiscal reality of needing to do more with less, promoting government efficiency is imperative. Over the past several years, one need not look further than the Department of Veterans Affairs to find numerous instances of waste, fraud, and malfeasance. These range from instances of staff intoxication during surgery to improper bonuses awarded to senior employees -- all while our veterans suffered from lengthy wait times for medical appointments and benefit appeals claims.

Recently, however, Congress granted VA Secretary David Shulkin the flexibility to promote greater accountability and efficiency for all levels of VA employees. Specifically, these new authorities include the ability to swiftly remove underperforming VA employees, recoup bonuses and other benefits provided to employees engaging in waste, fraud, or abuse, while expanding whistleblower protections for VA employees with the establishment of a new Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection. By signing this legislation, known as the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-41) into law, we appreciate President Trump’s support in working with Congress to make bold reforms to existing operational processes at a currently-beleaguered federal agency.

We write you today to solicit your input on whether the new authorities extended to Secretary Shulkin would be beneficial towards increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of your departments/agencies.

- Would the extension of these authorities to your department/agency be beneficial to operational efficiency, morale, and employee accountability?
- What recommendations do you have to improve or expand these authorities?

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Members of Congress

CC: All Federal Executive and Independent Agencies