

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

We are deeply concerned about mismanagement and accountability failures within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), highlighted in a recent report by the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG).¹ The egregious mishandling of Critical Skill Incentives (CSIs) and the subsequent lack of accountability demand immediate and decisive action to restore integrity and trust within the VA.

This report has brought to light the improper allocation of CSIs to senior executives within the VA. It has revealed a consistent disregard for statutory requirements and VA policies, resulting in the unjustified distribution of bonuses to executives. This blatant misuse of taxpayer funds is not just a breach of public trust but also a disservice to the courageous men and women who have selflessly served our nation.

Furthermore, the OIG report outlines systemic failures in internal controls and transparency within the VA. It underscores the need for urgent reforms to strengthen governance processes and ensure accountability for decision-making regarding financial management practices.

In light of these revelations, we demand you take the following actions:

- **Immediate Dismissal of Responsible Officials:** Hold accountable the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Under Secretary of Health, the Under Secretary of Benefits, and any other executives implicated in the mismanagement of CSIs. Their failure to uphold statutory requirements and VA policies warrants their immediate dismissal from their positions of authority.
- **Recoupment of Unjustified Bonuses:** Take swift action to recoup CSIs improperly awarded to executives who do not meet the criteria for high-demand skills. Executives who have failed to repay these unjustified bonuses must be held accountable through appropriate disciplinary measures.

It is imperative that the VA demonstrate its commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity and accountability in serving the needs of our nation's veterans. Failure to take decisive

¹ <https://www.vaogig.gov/reports/administrative-investigation/va-improperly-awarded-108-million-incentives-central-office>

action in response to these revelations will undermine public confidence in the VA and the trust of those who have sacrificed so much for our country. Congress passed the PACT Act to expand access to VA health care and benefits for millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances, not pad the pockets of career bureaucrats, particularly during a time when a majority of them were working remotely. Congress worked in good faith with the Department to provide for the necessary resources to recruit and retain employees with high-demand skills or skills that are in short supply. The brazen entitlement by senior executives appointed by this Administration shows a clear lack of judgement and selfishness and these individuals must be held accountable.

We trust that you will take swift and decisive action to address these critical issues and restore confidence in the integrity of the VA.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



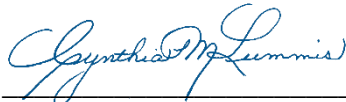
Bill Cassidy
United States Senator



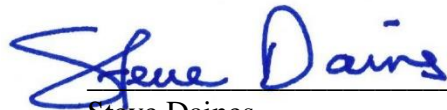
Rick Scott
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator