



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO

March 13, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of 110,000 federal employees represented by the National Federation of Federal Employees, we strongly urge you to **VOTE NO on H.R. 1259**, inappropriately named the VA Accountability First Act of 2017.

Do not be fooled by the name of this Act. The bill represents the desire of its sponsors to tear apart the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The goal of this bill—like many others of its kind—is to starve the VA of its talent and the means to succeed, thereby providing unjustifiable leverage for private sector investments in veteran's care. This bill cannot pass on its own merits which is why its sponsors needed to spread false information and gross mischaracterizations about what the bill will prevent and produce. In summary:

- H.R. 1259 will place veterans in danger because front line medical and administrative staff will fear for their jobs if they speak up against management or political appointees.
- This fear is very real since the bill will create at-will employment by removing systematic protections against prohibited personnel practices against subordinates.
- Systematic protections, such as due process, are there for the system not the individual.
- The whistleblower protections cited in the bill are wholly ineffective and provide no real protection for those who speak up for veterans.
- The bill attacks legitimate due process for those accused of poor performance or misconduct by forcing ridiculously short timeliness on employees and their counsels for representation.
- The bill limits the legal options of administrative judges at the MSPB, a clear sign that the intent of the bill is to corrupt fair and best workforce practices.
- This bill will disproportionately affect veterans who work at the VA.
- This bill does nothing to address resource, recruiting and retention at the VA; in fact, it will create bigger problems in each of these areas.

This bill is being rushed through the House because it cannot withstand legitimate debate. The sponsors of this bill do not have the best interests of veterans in mind. If they did, they would not attack the systematic protections that serve as a standard-bearer for truth in reporting care and treatment. I urge you to stand with recognized best practices in government and uphold the systematic protections that guard against corruption, undue political influence, and prohibited activities.

I urge you to VOTE NO on H.R. 2159, the VA Accountability First Act.

Sincerely,

Randy Erwin
National President