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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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January 22, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

On November 17, 2014, I wrote to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to request additional information to assist with my investigation into VA's accreditation of individuals to provide counsel and services to veterans. I requested the following information:

- (1) The number of VA benefits applicants that use VA accredited service providers to file for benefits,
- (2) The number of VA benefits applicants that file for benefits without the help of VA accredited service providers,
- (3) Claims denial rates for first time applicants who use VA accredited service providers,
- (4) Claims denial rates for first time applicants who go through the application process without the help of VA accredited service providers,
- (5) Appeal rates for applicants who use VA accredited service providers,
- (6) Appeal rates for those who go through the application process without the help of VA accredited service providers, and
- (7) The average number of claims each VA accredited service provider files per year, listed by each category of providers.

As of the date of this letter, VA has failed to provide the information as requested. Despite repeated e-mail requests from my staff, VA has also refused to provide a reason why it has not produced this information. VA has also refused to provide an estimated timeline for producing this information.¹

¹ Email from McCaskill staff to VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (Dec. 10, 2014); Email from VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to McCaskill staff (Dec. 11, 2014); Email from McCaskill staff to VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (Dec. 19, 2014); Email from VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to McCaskill staff (Dec. 23, 2014); Email from McCaskill staff to VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (Jan. 7, 2015);

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
January 22, 2015
Page 2

VA's failure to provide copies of these complaints is interfering with my office's legitimate oversight. I request that you provide this information as soon as possible, but in no case later than **January 29, 2015**.

Please contact Cathy Yu with Senator McCaskill's staff at (202) 224-9383 with any questions. Please send any correspondence relating to this request to the Subcommittee's clerk at Kelsey_Stroud@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: Rob Portman
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

Email from VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to McCaskill staff (Jan. 8, 2015); Email from McCaskill staff to VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (Jan. 8, 2015); Email from VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to McCaskill staff (Jan. 13, 2015); and Email from McCaskill staff to VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (Jan. 20, 2015).