

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We have been deeply disturbed to hear about recent discoveries and allegations of covered up wait times, and negligent treatment and care of our veterans at Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities. While we appreciate that the VA has launched an internal investigation, more needs to be done. The VA inspector general's preliminary report confirmed that data manipulation to hide long wait times was systemic throughout the VA health care system. Recent reports indicate thousands of veterans wait at least ninety days for medical care. And with Secretary Shinseki's resignation, it's more critical than ever to ensure a robust review as the VA transitions to new leadership. That is why we urge you to consider appointing an independent, bipartisan commission to look further into the delivery of care at the VA.

We are calling for a Blue Ribbon Commission because we believe it would bring much needed urgency to allegations that the VA has failed to care for many veterans by covering up patient wait lists and wait times. The fact that any veteran may have died while waiting for care is intolerable and we must do better. Our servicemen and servicewomen deserve the absolute best care we have to offer. It is our promise to those who serve and sacrifice for our nation.

While there may be many qualified candidates for such a commission, a few names stand out. Leaders with military backgrounds and firsthand experience working with veterans and their families, such as General Colin Powell and former Senators Bob Dole, Jim Webb, and Max Cleland would be ideal choices to lead this effort. Other candidates that might be suitable include the first female four-star, General Ann Dunwoody, General Wesley Clark, and former Secretary of the Navy, Senator John Warner. Others with similar experience from non-profit organizations, large health care systems, or the private sector may be appropriate as well.

Together, we can get to the bottom of this and ensure that our veterans are receiving the best care possible. We look forward to working with you to hold any responsible personnel accountable and we encourage you to consider appointing an independent, bipartisan commission to bring needed urgency to the investigation at the VA.

Sincerely,



RON KIND
Member of Congress



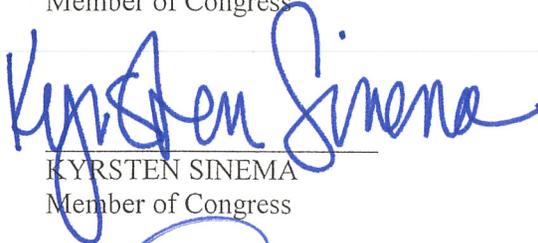
RAUL RUIZ
Member of Congress



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Member of Congress



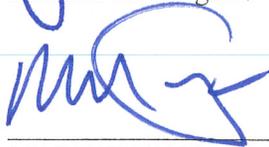
JIM COOPER
Member of Congress



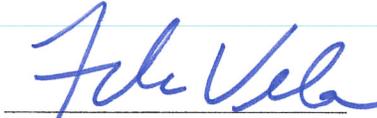
KYRSTEN SINEMA
Member of Congress



NIKI TSONGAS
Member of Congress



MARK POCAN
Member of Congress



FILEMON VELA
Member of Congress



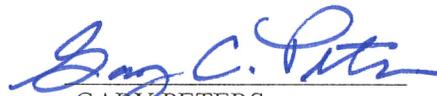
ANN KIRKPATRICK
Member of Congress



BRAD SCHNEIDER
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GARY PETERS
Member of Congress

Patrick Murphy
PATRICK MURPHY
Member of Congress

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