

JOE WILSON
2ND DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

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ARMED SERVICES

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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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(*PARTS OF)

May 29, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

I have reviewed numerous reports concerning the failures of Secretary Erik K. Shinseki and I join with the American Legion Commander, Dan Dellinger, supporting his removal as the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. For months I have given him the benefit of the doubt for removal, but every day more facts arise that demand his immediate removal. He has also lost the confidence of many in Congress, the American people and most importantly, our veterans due to the uncontrolled scandals at multiple VA health facilities that have plagued the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Specifically, in South Carolina's Second District, the William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center was investigated for deaths, delays, inadequate facilities, and personnel issues, just to name a few. Unfortunately these incidents, revealed by concerned professional staff, are not isolated to South Carolina, but mirror many of the problems that have been revealed at other VA health facilities across the country; most recently the Phoenix VA Medical Center.

Although each investigation was different, they exposed a long-term lack of leadership and management. Additionally, the Inspector General Reports that are created semiannually or after a reported incident do not receive the level of attention by the leadership to ensure implementation of the recommended courses of action to correct the deficiencies, to prevent future problems at the investigated facility, or to provide best practices for VA facilities that have had similar experiences.

The aforementioned incidents do not outline all of the complications within the VA medical system but represents a very small fraction of the systematic mismanagement of personnel, records, and resources that could be prevented. It is also a direct reflection of the lack of leadership demonstrated by Secretary Shinseki, who has been known for his behind the scenes approach to management. I believe that it is apparent now that this approach is ineffective and has led to the death of many great American veterans who expected competent and timely medical care in return for their sacrifice to this Nation.

Numerous reports have already been ignored by you and the Secretary, we cannot wait for an investigation that may take several months to years to complete. It is time that Secretary Shinseki is held accountable, much like military officers, for his less than adequate performance.

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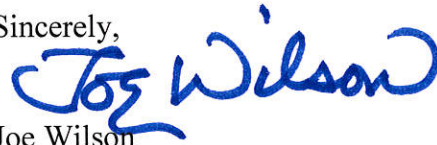
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Our veterans have earned the right to proper medical treatment and they deserve the benefit of good leadership.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter and look forward to an expedient resolution that will ensure the transparency and accountability needed to appropriately care for our veterans and restore faith in the VA medical system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Wilson

MEMBER OF CONGRESS