



Commit to Rigorous VA Oversight and Accountability

The Department of Veterans Affairs has systematically failed to follow the requirements of the VA MISSION Act. For years, the VA has pushed veterans away from community care options by manipulating wait time measurements, failing to hold employees accused of misconduct accountable, and diverting administrative resources to other agencies, like ICE and CBP. Congress must ensure the VA follows its mission through robust oversight and personnel accountability legislation.

THE ISSUE

Ongoing VA policy and personnel failures require robust congressional oversight and accountability

FAILING THE MISSION A recent Freedom of Information Act lawsuit [confirms](#) previous [VA Inspector General](#) and [Government Accountability Office](#) reports that VA administrators have improperly measured wait times for years, violating the VA's own regulatory guidance under the MISSION Act. This practice denies veterans community care access who are legally eligible. Additionally, though internal VA [guidance](#) directs schedulers to dissuade veterans from using community care options, the VA uses databases intended for community care to process health care claims for unauthorized migrants in ICE and CBP custody, all due to a VA [service-level agreement](#) with both agencies dating back decades. VA resources should be focused on the agency's core mission of caring for those who have served our country, not unrelated non-veteran patients.

PERSONNEL CLIMATE Abysmal personnel management has also harmed VA staff and veterans alike. Last March, the VA announced it would no longer [enforce](#) a landmark 2017 accountability law aimed at employees accused of misconduct. This decision is astounding given unfolding revelations of [sexual harassment](#) in the VA's Office for Resolution Management, Diversity, and Inclusion, the body responsible for combatting this very behavior. The ORMDI scandal follows last years' revelations that the VA allowed a supervisor accused in three separate internal investigations of creating a hostile work environment to [continue](#) in his role, despite termination recommendations.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

TRANSPARENT WAIT TIMES Congress should demand answers from the VA on its wait time calculation practices. Legislators should require that public VA wait time measurements are calculated as required by the MISSION Act's regulations. Congress should also require that the VA provide monthly averages at the facility, VISN, and national level to assist in oversight, adding funding penalties if the VA fails to comply with these transparency requirements.

FOCUS VA RESOURCES ON VETERANS Congress should demand answers about the scope of the VA's service-level agreement with ICE and CBP. Legislators should mandate that the VA's financial and administrative resources stay focused on the veterans it was founded to serve, not unrelated non-veteran patients in other agencies' care.

RESTORE PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY Congress should restore the VA's ability to hold employees accountable for misconduct without undue delays. The VA had these tools but lost them due to judicial rulings which gutted some of the previous accountability legislation. Improving VA personnel incentives need not come at the expense of due process and is direly needed.