

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2025

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write today to express our serious concerns regarding the effects of your federal workforce hiring freeze on the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). In the initial aftermath of signing this mandate, VHA hospitals and clinics around the country rescinded job offers for vital medical and support staff positions that ensure the daily operations of these facilities. The Richmond VA Medical Center was forced to rescind job offers for critical positions and temporarily halt local partnerships that allow medical students to spend part of their residency and clinical training at the facility in response to this mandate. The freeze prevents the new Fredericksburg VA Health Care Center – soon to be the largest VA health facility in the nation – from opening fully staffed and operational as scheduled on February 28. Similar disruptions to hiring and important community-based programs have impacted the Hampton VA Medical Center and Salem VA Medical Center, which, along with Richmond VA Medical Center and numerous outpatient clinics are the backbone of the VHA medical system in Virginia.

Moreover, the uncertainty created by the hiring freeze raises the possibility that veterans will be forced to seek care in the community, where existing staffing shortages already create barriers to care. These impacts represent only a small part of the damage that this ill-conceived and rushed mandate will have on veterans' health care facilities across the Commonwealth and the nation.

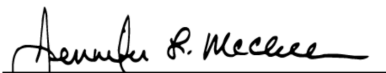
After significant pushback from members of Congress and veterans advocacy groups, the order was revised to provide exceptions for medical personnel. However, an onerous process remains in place for exemptions to allow for the hiring of vital support staff. We have deep concerns that this process will do irreparable harm to the VHA's ability to hire and retain the support staff necessary to allow VHA facilities to provide adequate patient care, such as administrative, facility maintenance, patient interaction and experience, care coordination, and food service personnel.

We cannot overstate the detrimental consequences that will be imposed on VHA employees and veterans across the Commonwealth. The VHA is the largest health care provider in the country, serving over 9.1 million enrolled veterans nationwide, approximately 615,000 of whom reside in Virginia. However, VHA hospitals and clinics routinely struggle with understaffing, compounded by compensation for these positions often being lower than that offered in similar roles at private facilities. Under such conditions, we must do everything in our power to support recruitment and retention efforts to ensure that our veterans are receiving the best care possible. This executive action does the opposite, disrupting recruitment efforts and putting our veterans at risk.

Given the incredibly damaging effects that this hiring freeze will have on veterans and their families and the chaos and confusion it has already unleashed on the VHA, we urge you to either revoke or clearly revise your order halting federal civilian hiring. This will ensure that VHA hospitals and medical facilities can resume hiring the staff necessary to continue providing quality and timely health care to our veterans and continue engaging in beneficial clinical training partnerships with local healthcare providers.

We look forward to your prompt action to protect the health and well-being of those who have served our nation.

Sincerely,



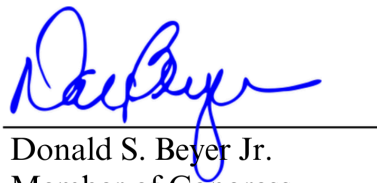
Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



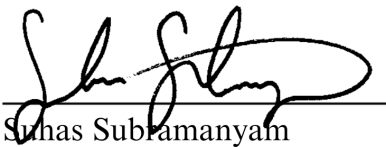
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



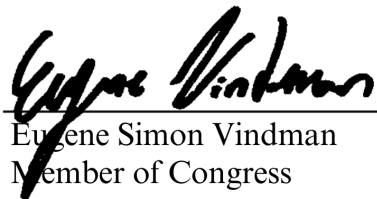
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman  
Member of Congress