

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

Since February, our Committees have made more than a dozen requests, many of them bipartisan, for you to provide Congress with the complete lists of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contracts you have cancelled or proposed be cancelled. Today, we write to once again demand these lists. In addition, we are requesting a briefing from VA officials on the process by which contracts were and continue to be identified and cancelled, any meaningful advance consultation with career VA officials whose programs are impacted by these cancellations, and all activities of the VA-designated Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) personnel or liaisons and other DOGE personnel involved in VA programs, operations, and management. Our requests for information on DOGE operations at VA began on February 12, 2025, and to date have received no substantive response.

On February 24 and 25, 2025, you publicly celebrated on social media your plan, carried out with Elon Musk and DOGE, to cancel hundreds of VA contracts you claimed were for “PowerPoint slides and meeting minutes” and you indicated were valued at \$2 billion. After you had given the orders for career officials in the Department to start the cancellations, a list of more than 870 contracts was leaked to Congress and the media. In reality, these contracts were predominantly for direct services for veterans or supporting VA operations including: suicide prevention and mental health treatment; radiology services; outreach regarding burial benefits and health care services; cancer care; the PACT Act; disability claims processing and audits; and ensuring safe and clean facilities. Amazingly, while claiming the purpose of cancelling these contracts was to improve efficiency and reduce waste, you also directed the cancellation of more than a dozen contracts whose purpose was to assist VA in conducting oversight activities to identify and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse and follow the recommendations of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the VA Office of Inspector General.

When the true purpose and impact of your mass contract cancellations were exposed, you and your leadership team directed career officials to pause some cancellations, stating in an internal email “VA Leadership is reconsidering previous guidance,” and “further contract reviews will be conducted to arrive at a new final decision.” Records show some contracts previously cancelled at your direction were then reversed while others remain cancelled. On March 3, 2025, you announced that instead of more than 870 contracts, you would cancel 585 contracts with an alleged value of \$1.8 billion. This announcement provided no detail or information to support that claim while also stating VA would redirect about \$900 million toward health care, benefits, and services for VA beneficiaries – again without evidence.

Also, on March 3, 2025, the Department indicated the 585 contracts would be cancelled “over the next few days” and that “the termination of these contracts will not negatively affect Veteran care, benefits or services, and will help VA better focus on its core mission: providing the best possible care and services to Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.” In your response to Senator King’s letter requesting information on these contracts, you refused to take accountability for your chaotic contract cancellation process and subsequent damage control. Your letter describes “a deliberative, multi-level review that involved the career subject-matter expert” but then admits the feedback from these experts was disregarded until after the fact when “VA rapidly reversed and restored contracted services in response to feedback from resident expert specialties, to include radiation safety, Veteran suicide prevention, and all other critical VA mission areas to avoid any clinically significant effect on patient care.” If this was in fact a consultative and deliberate process, why did the Department have to reverse your orders of just a few days prior to blindly terminate hundreds of contracts?

Now, more than two months later, Congress is still waiting for accurate and complete information on the contracts you have cancelled, the contracts you have restored after being cancelled, the process the Department is using, and documentation for the savings generated and reinvested. When asked about receiving this information and a briefing on DOGE’s operations at the Department, your leadership stated simply that VA “will not be providing a briefing on the issue.” Additionally, even though many of these contracts were officially cancelled more than two months ago, your staff has indicated “VA cannot release any contract lists as this is all ‘pre-decisional’ until the Contracting Officer officially notifies and signs the termination letter and negotiates potential settlement costs.” This statement is another attempt to hide the truth from Congress and runs counter to logic given that many companies and public databases list hundreds of VA contracts as already cancelled.

Further, on May 16, 2025, your staff provided Congress with a list of more than 445 contracts which it indicated were “terminated and closed contracts” and then went on to say “there are additional contracts in negotiation to be closed, and this list does not include contracts modified to change scope. The frequently mentioned list of over 800 contracts was not released by VA as finale (sic) and complete; it was an initial review followed by several additional reviews.” Our initial review of these statements and the information provided indicates a number of contradictions and inaccuracies, and raises numerous additional concerns and questions.

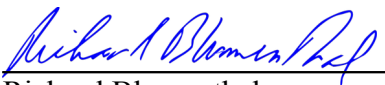
First, the statements from VA staff attempt to once-again mischaracterize the sequence of events associated with your multi-month effort to withhold information about your disorganized contract cancellation effort. The public record is clear: you directed the cancellation of hundreds of contracts impacting services for veterans and only reversed yourself when the nature of those contracts were publicly disclosed. Second, the list of 447 contracts includes at least 80 that were terminated during the Biden Administration. Third, according to the documentation you provided, the list of canceled contracts totals \$120.8 billion dollars in contracting value and claimed savings. Given VA’s entire budget for Fiscal Year 2025 is approximately \$426.3 billion, the value of these contracts would represent 28 percent of the Department’s budget. This questionable number is compounded by numerous contracts with wildly inaccurate value/savings figures. For example, one contract labeled “VA Program Management Support Services Contract” is shown with an astronomical value of \$44.8 billion. However, federal data shows the

value of this contract at approximately \$85 million – meaning the Department has misstated the value by \$44 billion. Finally, a number of the contracts provided do not appear on the list of cancelled contracts in the official Federal government system of record – the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). All of these points call into question the accuracy of the data in the document you provided to Congress.

We firmly support VA efforts to regularly review services procured by the Department. And that process should be built into any functioning acquisition and program management operation at VA. However, cancelling hundreds of contracts in a several-day period and then scrambling to restore dozens just a few days later is not an indication of good program management. It's an indication of waste and incompetence.

So that we may conduct our independent and constitutionally authorized oversight of the Department, we ask again for a copy of the list of more than 870 contracts cancelled or proposed for cancellation you discussed in your social media posting and video on February 24 and 25, 2025, which you indicated had a value of \$2 billion; a copy of the list of 585 cancelled contracts VA announced publicly on March 3, 2025, with an estimated value of \$1.8 billion; and a list of all contracts cancelled by VA from January 20, 2025, to present. Further, we request a briefing to the Committees to explain the timeline and process by which these contracts were selected and ordered cancelled; how the material provided to Congress on May 16, 2025, was assembled; and on DOGE operations inside VA related to contracts and more generally. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

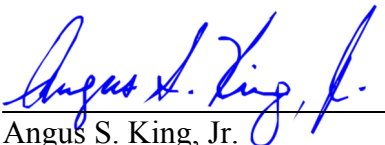
Sincerely,



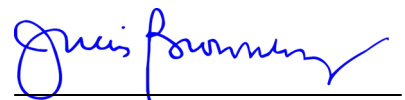
Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Veterans Affairs



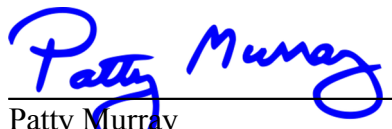
Mark Takano
Ranking Member





Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator




Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress


Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono
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