

### Department of Veterans Affairs

The so-called Department of Government Efficiency fired more than 2,400 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees last month, and seeks to terminate more than 80,000 additional VA employees. Veterans know you cannot terminate 20% of VA staff without impacting the quality, ease, and accessibility of their healthcare and benefits. DOGE also directed VA to cancel over 800 contracts that support chemotherapy treatment, screenings for veterans suffering from toxic exposure, detecting and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse, digitizing veterans' disability claim records, and more.

Does reducing mental health services for our veterans help root out fraud?

Does firing VA researchers working on treatments for substance use disorder help eliminate waste?

Does increasing the backlog of unprocessed claims sound like efficiency?

Of course not.

While DOGE claims to be bringing greater “efficiency” to government, slapdash actions like this are reckless and dangerous to veterans across the country.

Firing **one-in-five** VA employees will force our veterans to wait **20% longer** to see health care providers, have their disability claims adjudicated, have someone answer calls at the Veterans Crisis Line, and have funeral reimbursement requests processed.

Veterans have already begun to experience cancellations or postponements to time-sensitive medical appointments, suspensions of beds and operating rooms at VA hospitals, limited access to support lines for their caregivers and delayed openings of new VA clinics. **How is any of this efficient?**

And how did the Trump administration defend this move? They simply claimed these veterans are “not fit to have a job at this moment.”

**Terri Wollenberg**, a 32-year Army and Navy veteran who was working at a VA Vet Center – which provides mental and behavioral health services to veterans – until she was recently fired, said:

“There is no one to meet our clients at the door, there’s no one to confirm schedules, no one to help and assist with our counselors.”

“These are individuals who support the programs who make sure that veterans receive the services they get.”

Source: KCRG-TV 9, *The Gazette*

#### DEEP CUTS

- ▶ Approximately **6,000** veterans fired from federal agencies, many of whom have service-connected disabilities
- ▶ **2,400** VA employees already terminated, and **more than 80,000** expected to be terminated in the coming months
- ▶ Veteran-Owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses left hung out to dry by haphazard cuts to VA contracts

#### DEEP IMPACTS

- ▶ The Veterans Health Administration serves 9.1M+ veterans annually in 1,380 VA health care facilities, making it the largest U.S. health care system
- ▶ The Veterans Crisis Line has answered over 8 million calls since 2007
- ▶ Last year, the VA disbursed \$187B in benefits to 6.7M vets and survivors