



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

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August 20, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I write in response to a Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (OIG) report that identified improper shredding practices at the Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO). I am deeply concerned and would like to know what steps this office is taking to correct mismanagement, prevent its recurrence, and ensure prompt and accurate action on any benefit applications improperly shredded in the past.

The OIG report, released on August 17, 2015, disclosed findings after an unannounced inspection revealed that the Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Regional Office was not following the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) January 2011 policy on management of veterans' and other governmental paper records. It found serious issues with the shredding practices, including that:

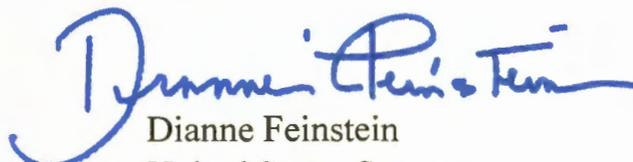
- There was no Records Management Officer (RMO) in place to ensure the appropriate management and safeguarding of veterans' records, to include providing oversight of the shredding documents;
- Officials who took over the role were not appropriately trained; and
- The Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Regional Office failed to provide any documentation of shredding logs for the past two years, as required by

policy, which made it unable for OIG to determine to what extent other documents were shredded that may have delayed veterans' claims.

I am deeply troubled by the OIG's findings given that the OIG has identified inappropriate shredding of veterans' claims in the past. It is also concerning that the report indicates a problem not only with frontline staff but also with management controls. I therefore request that you detail, within 30 days, the corrective actions you will take regarding the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Regional Office mismanagement of paper records.

Thank you for your attention to my request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or you may contact Tristan Colonius in my office at 202-224-2004.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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