

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 5, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Like most Americans, we are outraged at the documented misconduct at the U.S. Veterans Health Administration that has caused our military veterans to face long waits when seeking the medical care they have earned. That some veterans actually have died while waiting for needed care adds urgency to our efforts to act immediately. While last week's preliminary Inspector General's (IG) report indicated this is a systemic problem that dates back many years, it is our responsibility to take swift, decisive action now.

The IG report details widespread information technology challenges that enabled many of the unacceptable and inappropriate use of scheduling gimmicks and outright fabrication of performance metrics at the VA. We should be able to move quickly to begin restoring confidence in the VA by addressing these technology and data management problems in the current scheduling system.

This is a crisis that requires immediate action, and we recommend enlisting the expertise of the private sector to provide an assessment and recommendations for improvements to the current IT and workflow challenges at VA. By calling on our best minds across the private sector in a pro bono demonstration of solid corporate citizenship, we could create a blueprint for achievable action the VA should undertake within 60-to-90 days. Our veterans deserve this quick action on these urgent issues.

We already have an effective template that sorts through most of the legal and process issues to allow this type of private-sector assistance. For example, a 2010 Inspector General's investigation revealed widespread mismanagement at the U.S. Army's Arlington National Cemetery, including misplaced and mishandled remains of our warfighters. The IG report also revealed that Cemetery managers continued to rely upon decades of vulnerable, hand-written paper files in managing burial records. A consortium of technology companies operating under the auspices of the nonpartisan, nonprofit Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) jumped in quickly to provide their services and expertise at no cost to the taxpayer. This task force ultimately worked with the Army to create a legal framework that enabled the Army and Arlington National Cemetery to accept their pro bono help.

Engaging the tech sector and the best minds from leading American IT firms produced a comprehensive business plan to help the Army modernize its workflow procedures and upgrade the data management systems at Arlington. That effort, conducted at no cost to the taxpayers, represented the very best traditions of corporate citizenship.

We are confident that private sector expertise from across the country could be assembled to provide a similar pro bono service to help fix the challenges at the VA, and we stand ready to assist the Administration in moving quickly to help empanel this group.

Not every problem requires a government solution. Because of the immediacy of the many challenges at the VA, we urge you to work with us to implement this cost-effective, private sector initiative so we can begin restoring the trust of our veterans and the American public in the ability of the VA to meet the commitments our nation has made to our veterans. Our military men and women, their families, and our veterans deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,



MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator



MIKE JOHANNNS  
United States Senator



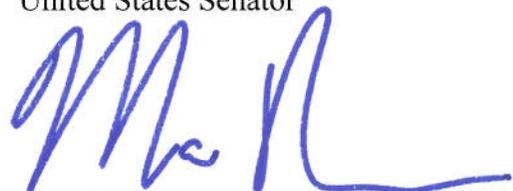
PATTY MURRAY  
United States Senator



RICHARD BURR  
United States Senator



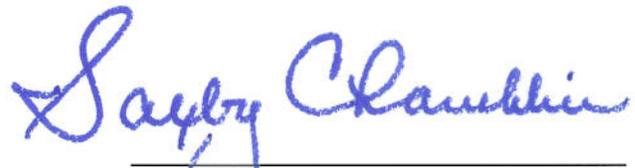
AL FRANKEN  
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO  
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JOE DONNELLY  
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MICHAEL F. BENNET  
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