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SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

January 21, 2026

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Collins and Secretary Noem,

I write to express alarm regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reported memo outlining the collection of data for all non-citizens “employed by or affiliated with” VA<sup>1</sup> and the potential sharing of that information with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for immigration enforcement efforts. These intimidation tactics waste critical time and resources for VA personnel that are already stretched thin. Instead of prioritizing the pressing service needs and care for veterans, VA is reported to have collected information on noncitizen employees and affiliates and presented them to Secretary Collins by December 30, 2025. This reported database of VA employees and affiliates exacerbates fear among noncitizens and will lead to diminished levels of care for veterans. We request that VA provide the intent for this database at this time and its plan to protect individuals’ privacy.

VA employees undergo a rigorous background check and are subject to the Continuous Vetting process<sup>2</sup> that replaced the traditional clearance investigation process in 2018, under the first Trump Administration.<sup>3</sup> This system conducts real-time automated vetting of employees, affiliates, researchers, unpaid interns, and all others with access to the VA system, according to

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<sup>1</sup>José Olivares, *Revealed: US Veterans Affairs to Share Immigration Data about Non-Citizen Workers with ‘Appropriate Agencies*, THE GUARDIAN (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/dec/03/us-veterans-affairs-database-immigration>.

<sup>2</sup>Continuous Vetting, DEFENSE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SEC. AGENCY, <https://www.dcsa.mil/Personnel-Vetting/Continuous-Vetting/> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

<sup>3</sup> See Exec. Order No. 13764, 82 Fed. Reg. 8115 (Jan. 23, 2017).

VA Press Secretary Peter Kasperowicz.<sup>4</sup> This process occurs regardless of an individual's citizenship or immigration status, ensuring that those who are currently employed by or "affiliated" with VA, are law-abiding individuals.

Employees and affiliates of the VA provide critical services to veteran communities and are doing so under challenging conditions where the provision of health care, counseling, employment, and education resources are under strain. In fact, VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report detailing the critical staffing shortages and increased wait times for veterans trying to access necessary care throughout the system.<sup>5</sup> California faces some of the most severe shortages of personnel at VA facilities in the country.<sup>6</sup>

As you know, more than 25 percent of all VA employees are veterans themselves,<sup>7</sup> underscoring the absurdity of this effort. Citizenship is not a requirement to serve in our armed forces,<sup>8</sup> and our military has been strengthened by the leadership and contributions of those born outside the country who embrace the U.S. as their home. The request for noncitizen data, specifically, can be viewed only as a thinly veiled effort to instill fear within the VA community, which will likely be used to conduct immigration enforcement efforts targeting (1) individuals who serve our veterans or (2) veterans who serve their fellow veterans.

I respectfully request answers to the following questions no later than February 12, 2026.

1. Have you, Secretary Collins, or any VA officials reviewed a report on noncitizens employed or affiliated with the VA?
2. What evaluation and analysis have VA performed to assess the impact on services to veterans if VA noncitizen employees and affiliates are detained or deported by immigration officials?
3. Please identify all categories of information the VA is collecting on noncitizen employees and affiliates.
  - a. What legal authority is the VA relying on to create and maintain such a database?

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<sup>4</sup> José Olivares & Aaron Glantz, *US Lawmakers Decry VA's 'Draconian Approach to Non-Citizen Database'*, THE GUARDIAN (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/dec/12/veterans-affairs-homeland-security-data-report>.

<sup>5</sup> See U.S. DEP'T OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, NO. 25-01135-196, OIG DETERMINATION OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION'S SEVERE OCCUPATIONAL STAFFING SHORTAGES 1 (2025).

<sup>6</sup> See *id.* at 6 n.15.

<sup>7</sup> See Drew Desilver, *What we know about veterans who work for the federal government*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (Apr. 10, 2025), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/04/10/what-we-know-about-veterans-who-work-for-the-federal-government/>.

<sup>8</sup> See *Requirements to join the military*, USA.GOV, <https://www.usa.gov/military-requirements> (LAST VISITED JAN. 20, 2026).

- b. What legal analysis has the VA conducted to ensure this database and the information it contains is compliant with the Privacy Act, HIPPA, and state laws regarding sensitive, personally identifiable information?
- 4. Has the VA shared the report or any of its contents with the Department of Homeland Security? If yes, please provide information on which DHS officials, offices, and divisions received access to such contents.
- 5. Has the VA started to share personnel information obtained as a result of the data collection efforts with the Department of Homeland Security? If not, does it intend to do so and when?
- 6. Does the Department of Homeland Security intend to conduct immigration enforcement actions in or around VA facilities?
- 7. Does DHS intend to prevent noncitizen veterans from obtaining health care or other services to which they are lawfully entitled?
- 8. Does DHS plan to detain or deport VA employees, affiliates, including children and spouses that are eligible to receive these benefits, or noncitizen veterans seeking services from the VA?

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator