

13 July 2015

The Honorable Jeff Miller
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

The Reserve Officers Association supports H.R. 1994, the "VA Accountability Act of 2015," to amend title 38 U.S.C., giving the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the authority to remove any VA employee based on performance or misconduct. This bill would improve veteran care by supporting the Secretary's leadership in building the VA team demanded by the American public, one committed to providing the highest level of care to veterans. H.R. 1994 complements the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, which among other improvements, enhanced the Secretary's ability to remove substandard senior executives.

Positive anecdotes and carefully chosen statistics notwithstanding, the public's trust in the quality of VA health care and benefits administration has needlessly suffered because VA employees were not doing their job, because VA managers at all levels neglected their responsibilities. Poor performance has cost veterans their health and even their lives; veterans die waiting for a claim settlement. Families trust that their loved one will be taken care of and not taken from them.

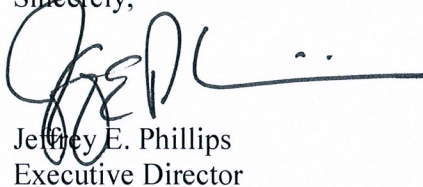
Civil servants must be accountable for their actions; poor performance must not be tolerated, nor mediocre performance rewarded with promotions and bonuses. Accountability will strengthen the civil service: high-performing teams will attract the nation's best into public service.

ROA appreciates the bill's protection of whistleblowers, who show the courage to expose to public scrutiny an agency all too willing to obscure its operations and especially its mistakes.

In offering our support, we further suggest that the personnel changes you propose could be used within other federal agencies to help ensure accountability and taxpayer value.

ROA's membership of more than 50,000, representing all the uniformed services of the United States, would be favorably affected by your bill. Thank you for your efforts on this issue, and your past support of the military and veterans. Please have your staff call Susan Lukas, ROA's legislative director, at 202-646-7713 or by e-mail at slukas@roa.org if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey E. Phillips
Executive Director

*Thank you
for your
leadership!*