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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2017

The Honorable David Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Shulkin,

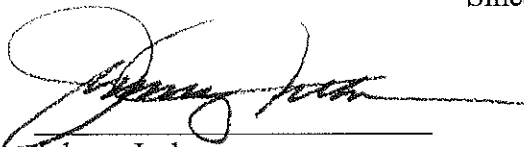
The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on March 22, 2017, regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continued inclusion on the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) High Risk List. The hearing allowed the Committee to gain greater understanding of the reasons VA was placed on the list and the progress being made – or not being made -- to address the underlying issues that will enable VA to be removed from the list.

Unfortunately, we remain concerned about the VA's progress in addressing the issues identified by GAO. Despite being initially placed on the list in 2015, GAO reports that it may still take VA until this summer to have completed a root cause analysis of the significant challenges identified by GAO, which have been further underscored by recent reports from both GAO and the VA Office of Inspector General. Without an in-depth review that enables VA to identify the root management issues for each of the five reasons VA was placed on the list, VA cannot expect to overcome the issues and be removed from the list.

As you know, this type of review is necessary to articulate metrics and resources that are needed in order to address underlying issues, and we therefore strongly urge you to take this placement seriously, and cease delay on completing a root cause analysis. It is our understanding that you have indicated such an analysis will be provided to GAO by June 1, 2017. We fully expect that you will notify this Committee if you cannot provide such information by that agreed upon date.

We look forward to reviewing the action plan VA will use to tackle the concerns raised by multiple oversight bodies. And we ask your staff to arrange a briefing for Committee staff after submitting the analyses to GAO, so we can ensure VA is provided with the support it needs in this effort. We trust that you will take this matter seriously, and complete the critical root cause analysis that will provide a path forward to GAO by June 1, 2017.

Sincerely,



Johnny Isakson
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs



Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs