

Jon's bill to **HOLD THE VA ACCOUNTABLE**

When the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) cannot hold bad actors accountable, everyone loses. Taxpayer dollars are wasted on employees who are not fully committed to helping our veterans. Other employees at the VA suffer because they are forced to work alongside or take direction from delinquent individuals. Most egregiously, our veterans suffer because the people responsible for caring for them are putting themselves first – not our veterans.

The VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act:

1) Increases Accountability Within the VA by:

- Giving the VA Secretary the authority to **expedite the removal, demotion or suspension of employees** at the VA based on performance or misconduct.
- **Shortening the process** to remove employees at all levels of the department when evidence proves that they have engaged in misconduct or are performing poorly.
- **Incentivizing managers to address poor performance and misconduct** among employees by including these issues in the annual performance plan.
- **Prohibiting bonuses** for employees who have been found guilty of wrongdoing.
- **Prohibiting relocation expenses** for employees who abuse the system.

2) Improves VA Leadership by:

- Giving the VA Secretary **additional flexibility** in hiring and firing senior executives.
- **Removing bureaucratic barriers** to holding senior executive accountable by expediting executive appeals and sending them directly to the VA Secretary.
- **Reducing benefits** for employees who are disciplined or removed for misconduct.
- **Expediting the process** for hiring VA Medical Center Directors.

3) Protects Whistleblowers by:

- Codifying the **Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection** at the VA and mandating that the head of the office be selected by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, **giving Congress more oversight** over the department.
- Requiring the VA to evaluate supervisors based on their **handling of whistleblowers**.
- Requiring the VA to provide department-wide **training regarding whistleblower complaints** once a year.

“The challenges at the VA are many, but tough problems require common sense solutions and this bipartisan bill is a product of what happens when you put aside politics and work together. This bill will make the VA stronger and ensure it can better deliver for Montana veterans.”



U.S. SENATOR FOR MONTANA
JON TESTER