

# What People Are Saying About Jon's **VA ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT**

## **VA Secretary David Shulkin:**

"I applaud Chairman Isakson, Senator Rubio and Ranking Member Tester for introducing S. 1094, the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, among other co-sponsors. Together with similar House-passed legislation sponsored by House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Phil Roe, I have increasing confidence Congress will provide me and future secretaries the authority we need to hold our employees accountable and protect whistleblowers from retaliation. This bill is great news for veterans and for the hardworking employees at VA."

## **Rep. Phil Roe, Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee:**

"I commend Senators Marco Rubio, Johnny Isakson and Jon Tester for reaching a bipartisan agreement on accountability legislation. I'm also pleased much of my bill, the VA Accountability First Act of 2017, is included in the Senate bill, and I hope the Senate will act swiftly to give Secretary Shulkin the tools he's made it clear he needs to bring accountability to VA. I know that the vast majority of the men and women who work at VA take their duty to serve veterans seriously, but bad actors have tarnished the reputation of good employees for far too long. Our veterans deserve to know that bad actors within the department will be held accountable, and I look forward to supporting this bipartisan bill in the House."

## **Rep. Tim Walz, Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee:**

"We applaud our colleagues in the Senate for their bipartisan effort to give the VA Secretary the tools they need to hold bad employees accountable and for doing so in a way that maintains constitutionally mandated workplace protections that help shield good employees and whistleblowers from retaliation. I look forward to working together with members in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle to find common ground and get this critically important legislation signed into law."

"PVA has long called for measures that bring greater accountability and protects those employees who have the courage to call out fraud, waste, and abuse in the Department of Veterans Affairs. We firmly believe that the culture of a company, organization, or federal agency is shaped by the worst behaviors its leader is willing to tolerate. VA Accountability & Whistleblower Protection Act is the first major step toward reshaping behavior in VA by tolerating bad behavior and poor performance no more. Our veterans deserve it; and so do the hardworking public servants of VA who are tired of being overshadowed by the performance of substandard managers and employees." - **Sherman Gillums, Executive Director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America**

**"The American Legion applauds this bipartisan effort to provide Secretary Shulkin additional tools to increase accountability and address poor performance within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The media's exposure of the 2014 Phoenix VA Medical Center wait-time scandal revealed that hundreds of veterans suffered and died while awaiting treatment. Incompetent and uncaring employees throughout the VA system utterly failed to execute their fiduciary responsibilities and violated the Hippocratic Oath. Furthermore, they failed to uphold the American peoples' promise to care for our veterans."**

**- Charles E. Schmidt,  
National Commander of the American Legion**

"The Military Officers Association of America strongly supports Secretary Shulkin having the necessary authorities and tools to effectively manage the VA workforce and hold employees accountable. The secretary needs these additional resources to take swift and appropriate action against those few bad actors within the agency so he can restore the trust veterans should have in their VA."

**- Lieutenant General Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret.), President of the Military Officers Association of America**

**U.S. SENATOR FOR MONTANA**  
**JON TESTER**

**“The veteran community has been pushing for three years now to adequately address the need for greater accountability at the VA while also maintaining a workplace that is able to attract and retain high quality professionals. Got Your 6 strives to be a collaborative partner of the VA, and given the bipartisan nature of this legislation, Got Your 6 strongly supports this approach to provide VA leadership's more efficient workforce management options.”**



**- Bill Rausch, Executive Director of Got Your 6**

“IAVA applauds the leadership and diligence of Senators Rubio, Isakson and Tester toward crafting this new bill to enable the removal of bad-acting employees at the VA. Nearly three years ago, the scandal in Phoenix alerted the country to the outrageous state of the VA health care system. IAVA and our members have fought since that time to give the VA secretary the tools needed to address workforce accountability and save veterans' lives. We encourage Senate and House leaders to quickly work together to pass the strongest VA accountability measure that can be signed into law.”

**- Tom Porter, Legislative Director of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America**

“AMVETS applauds the introduction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017. It is imperative that VA has improved authority to remove employees who are working against the mission of serving veterans. AMVETS is equally pleased with the whistleblower protections that would be put in place and monitored by the establishment of an Office on Accountability and Whistleblower Protection. We have long said that accountability is not a partisan issue, and are encouraged by the early bipartisan support of this important piece of legislation.”

**- Joe Chenelly, Executive Director of AMVETS National**

“Accountability must be a two-way street. The VFW salutes ... Sen. Jon Tester ... for introducing a bipartisan, bicameral, and comprehensive accountability bill. The VFW wants Secretary Shulkin to have the authority to manage his people in a manner expected of all senior executives, public or private. The VFW wants the secretary to weed out the nonperformers, and especially the criminals, regardless of whether the crime was committed on or off-duty. And the VFW wants this bill passed, because maintaining the status quo doesn't work for those who have borne the battle.”

**- Brian Duffy, National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**“DAV supports enactment of the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017. I applaud the bipartisan effort to ensure greater accountability and strengthened whistleblower protections within VA. We thank Senators Rubio, Tester and Isakson for working with DAV to ensure VA is able to enforce accountability standards to attract, hire and retain the brightest and best employees our nation has to offer to care for ill and injured veterans.”**



**- Garry Augustine,**

**DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director**

**“I am proud to support your VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act. This bill, if enacted, will significantly improve the landscape for whistleblowers within the VA. I thank you for your leadership and dedication to not only improving whistleblower protections at the VA but to making sure the agency has the tools and resources to implement those protections in a meaningful way.”** - Danielle Brian,

**Project on Government Oversight Executive Director**

“The Reserve Officers Association applauds the strengthening of accountability and whistleblower security throughout the federal government, and especially at VA” - **Jeff Phillips, Reserve Officers Association Executive Director**

“MOPH believes it is absolutely critical that VA has the tools to enforce employee accountability and protect whistleblowers. We support this important legislation and thank Senators Rubio, Isakson and Tester for bringing it forward.”

**-Hershel Gober, Military Order of the Purple Heart National Commander**

“We support the Committee's decision to establish the VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection. The Committee's legislation takes additional, necessary steps to promote accountability, protect whistleblowers, and improve care at the VA. Additionally, we support the Committee's decision to include whistleblower protection criteria in the performance plans of all VA supervisors and managers. This step will create additional incentives for supervisors to respond constructively to employees' concerns, helping to improve the culture at the VA.”

**- Carolyn Lerner, Office of Special Counsel**