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December 4, 2015

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, DC 20420-0001

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I write to not only award the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with last month's Golden Fleece, but to alert you of the serious mistrust and outrage that our veterans in Arkansas have expressed due to the VA's policy of awarding officials at the agency with substantial pay and bonuses while our Nation's veterans continue to face long waits for health care and unpaid and unresolved benefit claims.

Congress continues to provide the VA with the necessary authority and funding needed to fix the ongoing problems at the agency. However, when given the opportunity, the VA seems to clearly favor its own employees over the veterans that they are supposed to be serving.

The award of \$142 million in bonuses to VA employees and the decision to allow two VA officials that manipulated the agency's employee relocation program to keep the funds they received from defrauding hardworking taxpayers are two recent examples that highlight, in my opinion, the lack of common sense and the need for real change at the agency.

I have heard from many veterans in my district and across Arkansas that have raised their concerns about these indefensible actions by the VA. I realize the important work that many VA employees in Arkansas and across the country do to care for our Nation's veterans, but the refusal of the agency to deal with the bad actors in its employ has resulted in a critical lack of confidence from Congress and the American people.

It is time that VA leadership speaks up in support of our veterans and the benefits and care they have earned and deserve rather than cover for these misdeeds and award millions of taxpayer dollars for a job done poorly. I look forward to your leadership and stand ready to work with you on these important issues for our Nation's heroes.

Sincerely,

French Hill
Member of Congress