

FRENCH HILL  
2ND DISTRICT, ARKANSAS



WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
1229 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
PHONE: (202) 225-2506  
FAX: (202) 225-5903

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEE WHIP  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS,  
SECURITIES, AND INVESTMENT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MONETARY  
POLICY AND TRADE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM  
AND ILLICIT FINANCE

CONWAY DISTRICT OFFICE  
1105 DEER STREET, SUITE 12  
CONWAY, AR 72032  
PHONE: (501) 358-3481  
FAX: (501) 358-3494

LITTLE ROCK DISTRICT OFFICE  
1501 NORTH UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 630  
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72207  
PHONE: (501) 324-5941  
FAX: (501) 324-6029

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 11, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

I write today to inform you that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is this month's recipient of my Golden Fleece Award. I am awarding this to VA for its waste of over \$10 million on unwarranted reexaminations.

According to a recent report by the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG)<sup>1</sup>, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) spent an estimated \$10.1 million on unwarranted reexaminations from March 2017 through August 2017. Further, OIG estimated that VBA would waste an additional \$100.6 million over the next five years unless it ensures that VBA employees only request reexaminations when necessary.

According to VBA policy, employees can request reexaminations for veterans when there is a need to verify a current disability. However, before requesting a medical reexamination, VBA policy requires a Rating Veterans Service Representative to review the veteran's claims folder and determine whether a reexamination is needed. The OIG report estimated that 78 percent of unwarranted reexaminations lacked a pre-exam review. This is unacceptable, and VA must do better.

The OIG report includes recommendations to address this issue, and I urge you, in your new role as VA Secretary, to review this report and work to adhere to the VAOIG's recommendations to ensure that critical funds for our Nation's veterans are not wasted on these unwarranted reexaminations.

Should you require any additional authority from Congress to address these concerns, I urge you to notify us as soon as possible. I thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you to address this important issue.

Sincerely,

French Hill  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General. "Unwarranted Medical Reexaminations for Disability Benefits." July 17, 2018