

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

August 19, 2025

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

I write to express serious concern about the voluntary reduction in workforce at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by 30,000 employees through the end of September 2025. I also request clarification on the potential impacts that such reductions would have on the Rio Grande Valley and the Coastal Bend Region.

The VA provides countless lifeline services to our veteran population, whether it is cardiovascular care, radiology, oncology, or behavioral health. These vital services address specific health gaps in the lives of our veterans, and any cuts to these services would amount to a dangerous reduction to the care they have rightfully earned.

As you may know, the Rio Grande Valley and communities in the Coastal Bend Region such as Kingsville and Corpus Christi still do not have a VA Medical Center to care for our growing veteran population. There are over 23,000 veterans in the 34th Congressional District of Texas. Included in that population are almost 5,000 veterans with a service-connected disability of over 50 percent as of 2024¹.

Currently, veterans in our community must travel nearly 300 miles to receive care from the closest VA hospital, the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans' Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. Centers such as the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, which has clinics in Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen and Corpus Christi, provides a great service to our community but are limited in the services they can provide. With the VA hospital in San Antonio already servicing a large radius, I am concerned that the reduction in workforce will exacerbate the already long wait times and jeopardize the quality of care for veterans from the Rio Grande Valley, Kingsville, and Corpus Christi.

With these concerns in mind, I request a response to the following questions by September 2, 2025.

¹ United States Census. Service-Connected Disability-Rating Status and Ratings for Civilian Veterans 18 Years and Over available at <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B21100?q=b21100&g=500XX00US4834>

1. Will certain departments or facilities be disproportionately targeted with voluntary staff reductions?
 - a. Do any one of these facilities or departments serve veterans in the Rio Grande Valley or the Coastal Bend Region?
 - b. Will any facilities that serve veterans in the Rio Grande Valley, Kingsville, or Corpus Christi be impacted by these reductions? (Although I do not represent Corpus Christi, veterans from Kingsville often seek care in Corpus due to its close proximity.)
2. What safeguards are in place to ensure these voluntary staff reductions do not lengthen wait times or reduce the quality of veteran care or benefits?
 - a. Are there safeguards in place to ensure certain fields and departments are insulated from these reductions?
3. Do you foresee critical emergency services being affected by this reduction in workforce? If so, please provide a list of services and their locations.
4. What steps are you taking to ensure the VA informs veterans about these workforce reductions so that they can be reassured of the continuation of their care?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress