

The Honorable Jon Tester
Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans Affairs
United States Senate

June 26, 2023

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Moran:

We write to express our support for the whistleblowers who have bravely come forward to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee to disclose serious data security breaches affecting the privacy of veterans and employees within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These whistleblowers' concerns were explained at some length in a June 9, 2023 letter to the Committee from Empower Oversight and Whistleblowers of America.

The whistleblowers have raised grave concerns about privacy issues with the VA's Integrated Workflow Solution (VIEWS) system, including mishandling veterans' and employees' personally identifiable information (PII), personal health information (PHI), and confidential whistleblower disclosures. This requires immediate attention and remedial action. According to the whistleblowers, the VIEWS system's lack of accountability allows supervisors to store and share information about whistleblowers and their disclosures, creating a significant risk to the confidentiality of protected information and potential exposure to retaliation. Keeping in mind these disclosures have involved wrongful patient deaths, substandard care, fictionalized data, and contract fraud at taxpayer expense. Repeated delays by the VA in investigating and reporting on the whistleblower concerns further highlight the urgency of addressing these issues. If the whistleblower allegations are true, the misuse of VIEWS represents a serious breach of sensitive veteran and whistleblower information.

In light of these allegations, we urge the Committee to thoroughly investigate the whistleblowers' disclosures. Conducting a diligent and impartial investigation is essential both to addressing the alleged vulnerabilities and to sending a strong message that whistleblower disclosures are taken seriously by the Committee. In addition to investigating their information, it is essential that the Committee ensure they are shielded from retaliation—exactly what these whistleblowers allege the VA has failed to do.

Sincerely,
Empower Oversight
Government Accountability Project
Project on Government Oversight
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
Whistleblowers of America