

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

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

June 14, 2024

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our concerns over Pride flags being displayed at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities across Arkansas. This is an issue that we have raised previously, which you have seemingly dismissed.

Last June, we joined many of our colleagues in a letter expressing concerns over the Pride flag being flown and questioning whether this display of the flags was a proper use of taxpayer funding and an appropriate appearance for an apolitical government facility.<sup>1</sup> Federal agencies flew Pride flags above their facilities last year to show support for LGBTQ+ communities after you, under the leadership and direction of President Biden, authorized VA facilities to display Pride flags.

Your Department responded to our inquiry with a letter riddled with typos, spelling errors, and repeat copy and paste text.<sup>2</sup> This made clear to us, once again, that congressional oversight is a very low priority for you and the rest of the VA.

This year, we are witnessing more of the same. The Pride flag is once again flying over the VA facility in Little Rock, and our constituents and veterans across Arkansas have called on us to inquire about why the VA is expressing a clear political leaning. Your continuation of this policy demonstrates the continued disregard for the opinions of veterans you showed last year. The men and women who have served our country deserve to enter a facility that is free from discrimination and political posturing, and we should strive to provide them with an apolitical VA when they seek the care, benefits, and services that they have earned.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter from House Republicans Probing VA Secretary on Replacing American Flags with Social Movement Flags at VA Facilities, [https://veterans.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2023\\_06\\_06\\_letter\\_to\\_secva\\_on\\_pride\\_flag.pdf](https://veterans.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2023_06_06_letter_to_secva_on_pride_flag.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See <https://westerman.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/westerman.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/va-interim-response-letter.pdf>

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 8580 the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025, which would honor our nation's veterans by fully funding veterans' health care and benefits programs. Additionally, Section 257 of this bill would prohibit the use of funds to display flags over VA facilities other than the American flag or flags representing states, territories, departmental flags, POW/MIA flags, or military service-related flags. Prior to its passage, to protect his Administration's political agenda, President Biden announced he would veto this legislation, leaving veterans across the country without the benefits that they have earned.

The VA does not display flags that acknowledge and pay tribute to other designated months but has chosen to make an exception for the Pride flag in June. This politicization of the VA is inappropriate and does not represent all the veterans who have served our country. We urge you to consider the core values of the VA, rescind this policy, and remove any flag other than the American flag, flag of the Department of Veterans Affairs, state flags, and the POW-MIA recognition flag.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress



French Hill  
Member of Congress



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress



Steve Womack  
Member of Congress