

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
PROUDLY SERVING AMERICA'S VETERANS



Veterans, Employees and Taxpayer (VET) Protection Act

Background:

Under VA's current collective bargaining agreements with federal employee unions, union members can use "official time" to conduct union business such as working on employee grievances, addressing bargaining issues and some lobbying efforts while being paid by VA and the taxpayers.

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) [report](#) found that more than 340 VA employees, including numerous high level health care providers, spend 100% of their time working on union duties instead of the work VA hired them to do. What's more, VA does not have a standardized and accurate system to track how much time its employees spend doing union work.

The VET Protection Act would require VA to track the use of official time and submit an annual report on official time to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. This legislation would also prohibit the following: doctors and high-level clinicians from using any official time; employees involved with direct patient care from spending more than 25% of their time on official time; and any VA employee from spending more than 50% of their time on official time. Under this bill, VA employees would also be allowed to stop paying union dues at any time, and collective bargaining agreements between VA and unions would be required to be re-negotiated at least once every 5 years.

The Message:

- The best interest of America's veterans should always come first.
- VA doctors should not be working on union duties when there are veterans waiting to be seen.
- Employees with the most expertise and responsibility should be doing the job they were hired to do...not union business.
- Official time can be a useful tool, but to be fair to veterans, other VA employees and the taxpayers, it must be tracked and managed efficiently.
- This legislation would reduce the power of the union bosses and empower both employees and management.
- This bill prioritizes the healthcare and benefits that our veterans have earned before the administrative priorities of the union.