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# U.S. House of Representatives

## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

October 3, 2024

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

Dear Secretary McDonough:

Under my leadership as Chairman of this Committee, improving how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) lifts veterans out of homelessness has been a top-priority. As you know, House Republicans have passed multiple pieces of legislation to house and support homeless veterans. My Committee has also held hearings on ways to improve the Homeless Program Office (HPO). The Committee has also prioritized oversight and accountability in all programs at VA, not just the ones that get the most media attention. This is why I am so concerned by the recent VA Office of Inspector General's (OIG) report from September 18, 2024, titled "Additional Controls Are Needed to Improve the Reliability of Grant and Per Diem Program Data."

This report outlined the clear failures of VA HPO to conduct proper oversight on their own homelessness prevention programs. As you know, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program is VA's largest transitional housing program and has an annual budget of over \$275 million dollars. The program served nearly 24,000 veterans in fiscal year 2022. That is why it is critical that we collect accurate data on the effectiveness of the program to ensure that it serves veterans well and gets them back on track. Unfortunately, the OIG recently found that the Housing Operations, Management, and Evaluation System (HOMES) data has significant issues. The OIG also found that **twenty-one percent** of the veteran exits to permanent housing were logged in HOMES inaccurately. While an additional fourteen percent of program exits from transitional housing to a more permanent housing opportunity should have been recorded as negative exits because the veteran was asked to leave the program or left without consulting staff. This is unacceptable.

House Republicans have repeatedly raised questions about how VA tracks veteran homelessness data, as well as the lack of public reporting of it. Particularly as OIG found in the same report that VA's Homeless Program Office did not consistently review and conduct proper

oversight of the data in HOMES. I am disappointed to see VA failing to conduct necessary oversight on such a costly program that is so vital to ensuring that one of our most vulnerable veteran populations are placed in permanent housing.

I applaud the OIG's work to hold the Biden-Harris administration accountable. I find it concerning that considering this recent report, VA still announced last week that more than 43,000 veterans were housed. However, with significant errors in the HOMES data, and failure to track negative exits, I now question if this number is accurate. Given the OIG's findings, one could argue this is another example of the Biden-Harris administration cherry-picking data, refusing to tell the full story. As Chairman of this Committee, it is essential that I understand the extent of this problem through accurate reporting of the number of veterans housed and proper oversight of this program. With a budget of over \$300 billion, my Committee will ensure every dollar goes to the veteran, instead of contributing to government waste, fraud, and abuse.

In light of OIG's report on this issue, please respond to the following questions by **October 25, 2024**.

1. Please provide an implementation plan for the OIG's recommendations- to establish policies to obtain reliably GPD discharge information from grantees, to implement controls to ensure GPD grantee, Homes, and VA data is consistent with each other, and to increase oversight of HOMES, VA and grantee data and files.
2. Please provide the Committee with the actual number of housed veterans in FY 2024 after accounting for the OIG's findings.
3. Please explain how much of GPD's budget went to a provider that provided inaccurate information in HOMES.
4. Please provide the Committee with a detailed plan to recoup GPD funding that OIG found had been inaccurately reported.
5. Please provide the Committee with a breakdown of the percentage of veterans over the last five fiscal years who were permanently housed and returned to homelessness within two years.
  - If VA does not track this data point, please provide the Committee with the VA plans to begin tracking this information.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue on behalf of the veterans VA serves. Should you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my committee staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Bost", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**MIKE BOST**  
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member