

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2023

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It has come to our attention that in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation entitled, “A Proclamation on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Pride Month, 2023¹,” signed by President Biden on May 31, 2023, that Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities have been authorized to display Pride flags during the month of June. While we join many in questioning whether the display of these flags at VA facilities is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding, we write to you today to express our concern about the way in which the flag is being displayed, and how the display of this flag impacts other symbols of our nation and the commitment we have made to our veterans.

Specifically, we are concerned that Pride flags are being flown and displayed at the expense of other traditional flags at VA facilities², such as the American flag, whose Stars and Stripes represent all Americans. VA’s policy³ appropriately states no flag may be displayed on VA cemetery property “as a means for political activity or to promote any particular viewpoint or ideology.” I am sure you would agree with us that the Pride flag is viewed by many, including numerous veterans our offices have engaged with as a political symbol reflective of a social movement and represents only one group of Americans. As your policy makes clear, the Pride flag should never replace an American flag, a flag that honors the service of one of the branches of our Armed Forces, a flag representing the seal of the Department, or the POW/MIA recognition flag. We are unaware of any other flags replacing these traditional military service-related flags at VA facilities for other important designated months, like Black History Month in February, Women’s History Month in March, or Hispanic Heritage Month in September.

Veterans who have served our country deserve to enter a facility that is free from discrimination and political posturing. These men and women were apolitical when they served

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/05/31/a-proclamation-on-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer-and-intersex-pride-month-2023/>

² <https://www.wlox.com/2023/06/02/congressman-ezell-asks-va-leaders-remove-rainbow-flag-display/>

³ National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Directive 3220, “Flag Displays in National Cemeteries.”

our country, and we should strive to provide them with an apolitical VA when they seek the care, benefits, and services that they have earned.

By close of business on June 16, 2023, please provide us with an explanation for how VA intends to ensure none of its facilities violate its own policy which does not allow flags promoting politics, or any particular viewpoint or ideology. Please also provide your assurances, in writing, that any Pride flag that has replaced an aforementioned traditional flag has been removed and the traditional flag has been placed in its proper position. We appreciate your prompt attention and assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,



MIKE BOST
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



ELISE STEFANIK
Chairwoman
House Republican Conference



BRUCE WESTERMAN
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources



MICHAEL GUEST
Chairman
House Committee on Ethics



MATTHEW M. ROSENDALE, SR.
Member of Congress



MORGAN LUTTRELL
Member of Congress



MARIANETTE MILLER-MEEKS, M.D.
Member of Congress



ELI CRANE
Member of Congress

KEITH SELF
Member of Congress

DERRICK VAN ORDEN
Member of Congress

JEN KIGGANS
Member of Congress

JACK BERGMAN
Member of Congress

MIKE COLLINS
Member of Congress

DEBBIE LESKO
Member of Congress

AARON BEAN
Member of Congress

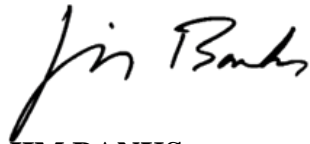
NEAL P. DUNN, M.D.
Member of Congress

W. GREGORY STEUBE
Member of Congress

JEFF DUNCAN
Member of Congress

ANTHONY D' ESPOSITO
Member of Congress

BILL HUIZENGA
Member of Congress



JIM BANKS
Member of Congress



LAUREN BOEBERT
Member of Congress




RICK CRAWFORD
Member of Congress



RON ESTES
Member of Congress



ANNA PAULINA LUNA
Member of Congress



FRENCH HILL
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MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE
Member of Congress



BARRY LOUDERMILK
Member of Congress



TROY BALDERSON
Member of Congress



STEVE WOMACK
Member of Congress



MIKE EZELL
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member