



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

**H.R. 1461, As Amended: The 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, as amended, would require VA to track the use of official time and submit an annual report on official time to Congress and the Office of Personnel Management. This legislation would also prohibit doctors, nurses, other high-level clinicians, and employees making over \$100,000 a year from using any official time, and would restrict any other VA employee from spending more than 25% of their time on official time. Both of these limitations would be waivable by the Secretary if it is deemed reasonable, necessary and in the best interest of veterans. Under this bill, VA employees would also be allowed to stop paying union dues at any time and the probationary period for new employees would be extended from 12 months to two 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, managed and utilized 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.