



SHIMP FOR PRESIDENT 2028

DRAFT EXECUTIVE ORDER

VETERANS FIRST: ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCESS, AND SERVICE

Presidential Day-One Policy Draft

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ACCOUNTABILITY | INTEGRITY | RULE OF LAW

This campaign discussion draft establishes a Veterans First initiative focused on faster access to care and benefits, stronger accountability, suicide prevention, homelessness response, rural access, outside-care coordination, claims-backlog reduction, fraud prevention, and transparent performance standards throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

VETERANS FIRST: ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCESS, AND SERVICE

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose and National Policy.

It is the policy of the United States that veterans who served the Nation shall receive timely, competent, respectful, and lawful service from the Federal Government. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall place veterans' access to earned benefits and health care, patient safety, accountability, and measurable results at the center of its operations.

No veteran should be forced to navigate unnecessary federal delay, repeated paperwork, avoidable scheduling failures, or administrative indifference in order to obtain benefits or care for which the veteran is legally eligible.

Sec. 2. Immediate VA Performance Review.

- (a) Within 30 days, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a department-wide review of major access, claims, staffing, contracting, patient-safety, and administrative performance problems.
- (b) The review shall identify facilities and programs with significant appointment delays, claims backlogs, repeated audit findings, patient-safety concerns, staffing shortages, deficient contractor performance, or unusually high complaint levels.
- (c) Within 90 days, the Secretary shall provide the President a corrective-action plan with measurable deadlines and responsible officials.

Sec. 3. Health Care Access and Appointment Backlogs.

- (a) VA shall identify veterans experiencing excessive delays for primary, specialty, mental-health, dental, diagnostic, and other covered care.
- (b) VA shall improve scheduling, referral tracking, cancellation management, wait-time measurement, and communication with veterans.
- (c) Where veterans are eligible for community care under federal law, VA shall improve timely referral and authorization to qualified non-VA providers rather than allowing avoidable administrative delay to prevent access.
- (d) Nothing in this order expands eligibility beyond that authorized by Congress.

Sec. 4. Veterans Benefits and Claims Backlog.

- (a) The Secretary shall establish a focused plan to reduce avoidable delays in disability compensation, pension, dependency, survivor, education, and other benefits administered by VA.
- (b) VA shall identify claims delayed because of missing federal records, unnecessary duplicate examinations, processing errors, technology failures, or preventable internal handoffs.
- (c) Claims decisions shall be based on applicable law and evidence and shall preserve veterans' statutory notice, review, and appeal rights.

Sec. 5. Veteran Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Access.

- (a) VA shall treat veteran suicide prevention as a national priority and shall strengthen timely access to crisis services, mental-health appointments, substance-use treatment, peer support, and follow-up after acute crises.
- (b) VA shall improve coordination between emergency departments, inpatient facilities, outpatient programs, community-care providers, and the Veterans Crisis Line where authorized by law.
- (c) The Secretary shall identify geographic areas with insufficient mental-health capacity and develop a plan for staffing, telehealth, mobile services, community care, or other lawful solutions.

Sec. 6. Ending Veteran Homelessness.

- (a) VA, in coordination with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other appropriate agencies, shall identify barriers preventing homeless or housing-insecure veterans from obtaining available federal assistance.

- (b) Agencies shall improve coordination of housing assistance, health care, benefits enrollment, employment services, identification documents, and other existing programs.
- (c) The Administration shall identify statutory or funding gaps requiring congressional action and submit recommendations where appropriate.

Sec. 7. Rural and Transportation Access.

- (a) VA shall assess health-care access for veterans living in rural and remote communities, including travel distances, specialty-care shortages, transportation barriers, broadband limitations, and emergency-care access.
- (b) VA shall use existing authorities to improve telehealth, mobile care, transportation assistance, community-care networks, and recruitment or retention of clinicians in underserved areas.
- (c) Telehealth shall supplement rather than automatically replace clinically necessary in-person care.

Sec. 8. Women Veterans and Specialized Care.

- (a) VA shall review access to specialized services for women veterans and other veterans requiring specialized clinical programs, ensuring that eligible veterans can obtain timely and appropriate care.
- (b) The review shall address staffing, privacy, maternity care coordination, mental-health services, military sexual trauma services, and other legally authorized programs.

Sec. 9. Accountability for Neglect, Fraud, and Misconduct.

- (a) Credible allegations of patient neglect, falsified records, retaliation, procurement fraud, theft, bribery, deliberate concealment of material safety problems, or other misconduct shall be promptly referred to the appropriate VA office, inspector general, licensing authority, or law-enforcement agency.
- (b) VA shall use lawful disciplinary and corrective authorities when evidence establishes misconduct or sustained poor performance.
- (c) Nothing in this order presumes guilt or eliminates civil-service, collective-bargaining, whistleblower, due-process, or other protections provided by law.

Sec. 10. Whistleblower Protection.

- (a) VA employees and contractors shall be informed of lawful channels for reporting patient-safety threats, fraud, waste, abuse, gross mismanagement, and violations of law.
- (b) Retaliation against persons making disclosures protected by federal law is prohibited.
- (c) The Secretary shall review unresolved allegations of retaliation and ensure referral to the authorities having jurisdiction.

Sec. 11. VA Contracting and Community Care Accountability.

- (a) VA shall review significant health-care, information-technology, construction, staffing, and service contracts for performance, cost growth, billing integrity, conflicts of interest, and compliance with contractual requirements.
- (b) Community-care contractors shall be evaluated for timely authorization, provider-network adequacy, payment performance, veteran service, and data accuracy.
- (c) Where legally justified, VA shall pursue corrective action, recovery of overpayments, contract remedies, suspension or debarment proceedings, or referral for investigation.

Sec. 12. Veterans Crisis and Emergency Care Coordination.

- (a) VA shall review procedures governing emergency care, urgent care, crisis referrals, and notification requirements to reduce avoidable denial or delay caused by administrative confusion.
- (b) VA shall provide veterans with clear information explaining how to obtain emergency and urgent care under applicable federal law and how to address disputed eligibility or payment decisions.

Sec. 13. Transition From Military to Civilian Life.

- (a) The Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Defense shall review transition programs for separating service members and identify gaps in benefits enrollment, medical-record transfer, disability claims, employment assistance, housing information, and mental-health continuity.

- (b) Agencies shall improve lawful data transfer and coordination so veterans are not unnecessarily required to repeatedly provide records already held by the Federal Government.

Sec. 14. Veteran Employment and Small Business Opportunity.

- (a) VA, the Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, and other appropriate agencies shall improve coordination of existing veteran employment, apprenticeship, credentialing, entrepreneurship, and veteran-owned small-business programs.
- (b) Agencies shall identify unnecessary administrative barriers that prevent qualified veterans from accessing programs established by Congress.

Sec. 15. Public Performance and Accountability Dashboard.

- (a) VA shall establish or improve a public performance dashboard reporting meaningful aggregate measures of appointment access, claims processing, appeals, community-care referrals, patient safety, major unresolved inspector-general recommendations, and other appropriate performance indicators.
- (b) Metrics shall be defined consistently and shall not be manipulated to conceal delays or create a misleading appearance of performance.
- (c) Public reporting shall protect medical privacy, personal information, law-enforcement-sensitive information, and other information protected by law.

Sec. 16. Inspector General Cooperation.

- (a) VA leadership shall cooperate with the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General as required by law and shall provide timely access to records, facilities, personnel, and information within the Inspector General's statutory authority.
- (b) Significant unresolved recommendations shall receive written corrective-action plans or written explanations for nonconcurrency.

Sec. 17. Recommendations to Congress.

- (a) Within 180 days, the Secretary shall identify reforms that cannot be accomplished under existing executive authority and shall submit legislative recommendations to the President.
- (b) Recommendations may address staffing, facilities, community care, disability claims, appeals, homelessness, mental-health capacity, rural access, information technology, accountability authorities, and other statutory or appropriations needs.

Sec. 18. General Provisions.

- (a) Nothing in this order shall impair authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, an inspector general, or the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.
- (b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.
- (c) Nothing in this order alters eligibility for veterans benefits or health care established by Congress, authorizes disclosure of protected medical information, or permits adverse action without legally required process.
- (d) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity against the United States, its departments, agencies, officers, employees, agents, contractors, or any other person.

THE WHITE HOUSE,

January 20, 2029.

DRAFTING NOTE

This order directs immediate administrative action within existing executive authority while preserving eligibility rules, appropriations, due process, medical privacy, inspector-general independence, and statutory rights established by Congress. Reforms requiring new benefits, mandatory spending, or changes to veterans statutes are reserved for legislative recommendations.