

**July 2015**  
**Report to Secretary Bob McDonald on**  
**Problem Managers at VA Central Office**

by  
American Federation of Government Employees  
(AFGE) Local 17

Secretary Robert “Bob” McDonald has mounted an ambitious effort to align all components of VA with VA Core Values encapsulated in the ICARE principles, VA Core Characteristics, and the MyVA initiative. Additionally, he often talks about choosing the “harder right instead of the easier wrong.” Unfortunately VA still employs many managers who often choose the “easier wrong” when it comes to the treatment of their employees.

ICARE stands for Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. All VA employees, from top to bottom, must recommit to the ICARE standards periodically. At all times, they must conduct themselves in a manner that comports with the ICARE standards. There are six VA Core Characteristics, namely Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality, Innovative, Agile, and Integrated, to which VA employees must adhere. The VA Core Characteristics define what VA stands for and what VA endeavors to be as an organization. Finally, the MyVA initiative strives to create a Veteran-centric organization. In order to achieve a Veteran-centric organization, the MyVA initiative mandates that VA employees be empowered so that they may identify challenges, craft solutions, and deliver outstanding service to Veterans.

Secretary McDonald recognizes the central role VA employees play in serving Veterans. Competent, well-trained, respected, and satisfied employees who are empowered to use skill, creativity, and common sense to fulfil their duties perform more effectively than employees who are demoralized and fearful. In contrast, employees who are micromanaged, abused, tormented, or otherwise mistreated focus on self-preservation. Those who are trusted and valued feel sufficiently safe to turn their attention to the wellbeing of others. It is these employees that are best able to serve our Veteran clientele.

Secretary McDonald acknowledges that managers set the tone for VA employees. Capable managers model ICARE, adhere to VA Core Characteristics, and implement the MyVA initiative. These managers foster a collaborative and trusting culture, which inspires excellence and produces good results. Conversely, managers who disregard ICARE, VA Core Characteristics, and the MyVA initiative induce apprehension, unease, anxiety, and dread, which prevent employees and their organizations from flourishing.

The Secretary has sought the help of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 17 (hereinafter “Union”) to identify VA Central Office (VACO) managers who do not comport themselves in a manner that promotes VA Core Values (ICARE), VA Core Characteristics, and the MyVA initiative. In turn, the Union reached out to VACO employees to provide details regarding managers whose conduct, competence, and/or managerial style do not comply with the expected standards as set forth in ICARE, VA Core Characteristics, and the MyVA initiative.

The Union has met with numerous VACO employees who wished to discuss their experiences. With few exceptions, the Union has been impressed by the dedication, competence, and commitment of these employees. Sadly, their ability to contribute is hampered by unfit managers who have chosen to ignore the Secretary’s standards.

The following is a list of managers who are disruptive and ineffective. The Union has been privy only to information from VACO employees who had the courage to come forward. The list, therefore, might well be incomplete. The information included herein is true to the best of the Union's knowledge.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) does not respect the contributions of government employees. He has expressed a desire to employ only a small number of higher-level government employees and replace the rest with contractors. Indeed, it appears that he has only one GS-7 employee remaining. Several lower-level government employees have left (b) (6) during (b) (6) tenure. They have not been replaced. Rather, (b) (6) has chosen to have their duties performed by armies of contractors. The inherent nature of contracting, which often entails high turnover, coupled with litigation over irregularities in contract awards, has brought on a revolving door of contractors in (b) (6) contributing to instability, as the duties of the remaining government employees are regularly altered depending on the availability of contractors. Recently, almost overnight, their number was sharply reduced when the incumbent's contract was withdrawn pursuant to litigation, thus creating chaos. In addition to the intrinsic instability engendered by the use of contractors, Federal employees do not have an opportunity to develop close ties with the contractors, leading to less collaboration and organizational cohesion than exists among the established Government workforce.

In addition to the instability and lack of cohesion caused by the extensive use of contractors, contractors at (b) (6) often share space with Government employees, making them privy to confidential information that is intended for Government employees only. There is no way to guarantee that contractors will use such information in an ethical manner. In any event, the close proximity of Government employees and contractors could well lead to illegal disclosures.

(b) (6) appears to treat (b) (6) as a blank check. Prior to (b) (6) ascent, (b) (6) was staffed by no more than 20 Federal employees. Currently, there are far fewer Federal employees and well over 100 contractors. (b) (6) is not transparent about the contractors' activities, and he is not open to explaining the benefit, if any, derived from their use. It is unclear whether he is serving as a good steward of the taxpayers' money by employing so many contractors in an organization that operated successfully with far fewer Federal workers. Indeed, the contractors do not seem particularly busy, and they have time to attend conferences and luncheons on a regular basis. The foregoing activities do not serve the taxpayers. As well, (b) (6) spends millions of dollars a year organizing the (b) (6) conferences when these conferences could be planned via no cost contracts.

In addition to the foregoing, (b) (6) personal conduct is unprofessional, as he intimidates subordinates by shouting and swearing. He can be heard screaming behind closed doors. (b) (6) has been described as unpleasant.

(b) (6) does not adhere to ICARE. His Integrity is questionable at best as there is pending litigation that arose pursuant to a very large (b) (6) contract awarded in the fall of 2014. He does not exhibit Commitment, Advocacy, or Excellence by replacing or making efforts to replace a stable workforce endowed with extensive technical expertise and organizational knowledge with a temporary and exceedingly fluid workforce. When litigation caused a contract to be withdrawn in the fall of 2014, scores of contractors were let go at once leading to chaos at the office, an atmosphere that detracts from serving Veterans at the expected level. Furthermore, he has not been open to explaining the benefits of his huge expenditures. (b) (6) demonstrates a lack of Respect to subordinates by raising his voice, uttering vulgarities, and behaving in a manner that is at the very least, distasteful.

As to VA Core Characteristics, (b) (6) is not Trustworthy because he is not transparent regarding the benefits, if any, of his great expenditures. He is deficient with respect to Quality, which cannot be achieved with short-term employees. As well, he has not been transparent with his liberal use of taxpayer funds.

Finally, he is deficient with respect to the MyVA initiative in failing to empower the established Government workforce. His Federal employees are demoralized when they see their functions slowly transferred to less qualified contractors despite years of hard work and specialized knowledge. The (b) (6) employees who are known to the Union are exceptionally dedicated to VA's mission. The shapeshifting milieu does not allow (b) (6) to harness the talents of highly experienced employees as efficiently and effectively as possible.

(b) (6)

The Union interviewed five VA employees who work or have worked under (b) (6) (b) (6), all of whom are credible and have impressive technical skills. They are highly intelligent and articulate, very capable, and committed to fulfilling their jobs in a manner that advances (b) (6) mission in particular and VA's mission in general. Some are Veterans who sought employment at VA in order to help other Veterans. Unfortunately, they are absolutely unable to perform their duties effectively under (b) (6) direction.

The result of such behavior on behalf of such a manager has been a widespread exodus of these very talented individuals would be detrimental to VA's operations. . The high turnover rate is directly related to (b) (6) poor leadership, failing to support her staff, and general incompetence at her job due to the lack of both managerial and technical expertise. One of her former employees commented that (b) (6) epitomizes everything Secretary McDonald wants to change at VA.

In fact, (b) (6) has driven away many employees including at least three senior level employees, some of whom took demotions in lieu of working for her. In January 2015, two senior employees turned in letters of resignations on the same day giving only two weeks' notice. Because these two senior employees left, and have yet to be replaced, there are no (b) (6) remaining on (b) (6) team. Several months prior, another senior-level employee working for (b) (6) also quit. The fact of three senior level resignations in a short period is striking due to the small size of (b) (6) office.

Employees at all levels who work for (b) (6) are fearful, unhappy, and filled with dread when reporting for duty. The Union has interviewed several of her current and former employees. With the exception of the employees who left VA, they explicitly required reassurance from the Union that names and other identifying information would not be used in this report for fear of retribution. Indeed, (b) (6) behavior has had an impact on the health of her employees, some of whom are seeking treatment for stress-related conditions that did not exist before encountering her.

(b) (6) arrived at VA with a poor reputation and a spotty record from another agency. Unfortunately, she lived up to her reputation. (b) (6) is negative, demeaning, and speaks to subordinates in an extremely condescending tone. She humiliates her subordinates in public with a raised voice to ensure that her words are audible to all. She insults dedicated employees regarding their commitment and competence but fails to give constructive feedback. She bullies, issues threats, screams, and uses derogatory names. When she is dissatisfied with an employee for any reason, she ceases communications with and sidelines the employee, leaving him or her with little idea of what is going on. She rants and raves upon hearing an opposing opinion or any opinion that is not her own. Often, she complains to subordinates that men are working to undermine her authority because of her gender. She expresses concern for her livelihood, and states explicitly that she will not let any of her subordinates threaten it, as she is not independently wealthy. One must keep in mind that such comments reflect a fundamental lack of sensitivity and empathy, as her SES salary is far greater than that of most General Schedule Federal employees.

(b) (6) has been moved from office to office at (b) (6). She arrived at VA several years ago as a (b) (6). Having failed at that position, she was given a temporary assignment as an (b) (6). After being removed from that post, she appears to have been placed in a position with no clear duties. Consequently, an organization with the title of (b) (6) was created just for her. She never came up with a vision or a strategic plan for her group. One of the senior staffers that left VA for greener pastures had nothing to do for the last several months of his tenure at VA because (b) (6) had refused to assign him work. Her instructions and plans shift regularly. (b) (6) does not accept feedback and exhibits significant attention problems at meetings with employees where she moves from topic to tangentially related topic without returning to the original matter, thereby preventing any sort of resolution. One former employee said that no matter what he did, it was always the wrong thing because he was doing what

(b) (6) had instructed the day before. He would be admonished nastily to “get with the program” and perform in a manner radically different than what had been instructed previously.

The lack of staff due to resignations and reassignments coupled with the lack of vision has taken a toll on the productivity of her office. Instead of improving the work environment to ensure morale and consequently, retention, she has indicated that she would begin to rely on contractors. One wonders what contractors would do without coherent instructions.

(b) (6) is untrustworthy and dishonest. For example, she has instructed subordinates to sign documents indicating that midyear evaluations took place even though they had not. Indeed, she has failed to issue both performance standards and performance evaluations to some employees in violation of VA policy and OPM regulations. At one point, she unlawfully tried to add critical elements to employees’ performance plans with less than 90 days remaining in the fiscal year.

(b) (6) is overly concerned with her image at the expense of her own employees and the mission of (b) (6). Perhaps for that reason, she explicitly forbade the senior employees who resigned in January 2015 from speaking to senior executives at (b) (6), namely (b) (6) and (b) (6).

(b) (6) conduct defies the VA Core Values named in ICARE. She displays no Integrity and fails to adhere to the highest professional standards. Her behavior is not only unprofessional but also abusive. As well, she exhibits a lack of honesty by asking subordinates to falsify documents. Her Commitment of VA’s mission is questionable because she is so ineffective and unable to maintain a team that she is unable to accomplish even basic tasks required at her office. She shows no Respect for employees but rather creates a hostile work environment. Finally, she does not strive for Excellence, specifically, she has not heeded the Innovative standard but instead has created unproductive relationships with her staff. As apparent from the senior employee who had nothing to do despite practically begging for work, she prevents her staff members from using their skills to the fullest extent.

The Union emphasizes that (b) (6) leadership does not meet the standards set forth in the MyVA initiative. She has inadequate staffing due to the poor retention engendered by her lack of professionalism and failure to effectively communicate with subordinates. Without a doubt, she does not recognize the central role that highly motivated and very capable VA employees play in serving Veterans.

As stated above, without fail, (b) (6) current and former employees are a talented group. Instead of harnessing their competencies to serve Veterans, she wastes VA funds by failing to formulate a coherent action plan for her office. Her current and former employees want to have an impact and improve the lot of Veterans. They are frustrated because their efforts are stymied at every turn. They not empowered to serve, and they are actively prevented from contributing.

The Union has been assured that (b) (6) and (b) (6), (b) (6) superiors, were made aware of her shortcomings. Unfortunately, these individuals failed to act. Instead of addressing (b) (6) inadequacies, (b) (6) advised the two executive-level employees who resigned in unison in January 2015 to read *Throwing the Elephant: Zen and the Art of Managing Up* by Stanley Bing. He explained that they could not choose their managers and that they would have to learn how to manage their manager. At the meeting where this reading recommendation occurred, (b) (6), quite curiously, would not utter (b) (6) name.

(b) (6)

The Union met with several of (b) (6) employees. They felt so strongly about bringing (b) (6) to the Union's attention that they arranged a meeting with Union representatives at a time when they could all be present. The Union was told that the only worthwhile lesson learned from (b) (6) was what not to do as a supervisor.

(b) (6) is a bully. Employees avoid him and contractors fear him. He makes the lives of employees miserable, and even longtime VA employees dread coming to the office. He is obstructive, divisive, combative, and argumentative, and he actively discourages teamwork. He flies into rages over minor issues like a server going down. He reveals private employee matters to other staff members. He accuses subordinates of trying to take his job. He is a very large man and uses his heft to intimidate his staff. Often, he stands next to a seated subordinate with his fists clenched in a manner clearly calculated to cause apprehension. He has a monitor at his desk, which he uses to surveil his employees.

(b) (6) retaliates when dissatisfied. For example, he counseled an employee when he learned that the employee was planning to meet with the Union. He does not afford Bargaining Unit members an opportunity to have Union representation even when discipline is threatened.

Many employees have written their congressional representatives to complain about (b) (6). (b) (6). Due to dissatisfaction, there has been a revolving door of employees working under his supervision. Approximately 70 percent of his 2011 staff has transferred to other divisions or left VA. (b) (6) considers disagreement a personal affront and becomes very angry when people disagree with him. He stops speaking with those who dare express disagreement and does not give the offending employees any further work. He looks for any reason to find fault with employees and relishes the opportunity to use even the most benign customer concern to admonish them.

(b) (6) practices favoritism and seems especially fond of those who share his religious beliefs. He manipulates and actively tries to get rid of employees he does not like. He has accused employees of lying without any supporting evidence. He employs snitches to advise him of the goings on in the workplace. At the Baltimore office, he asks contractors to report on Government employees.

According to those the Union interviewed, (b) (6) relied on false information to fire an employee who was rehired after an investigation exonerated her of any wrongdoing.

(b) (6) does not behave reasonably toward his employees. In particular, he uses his power to create barriers to taking leave. He becomes very upset about leave requests and expresses his displeasure by “screaming and hollering,” according to employees. For example, he makes it hard for employees to take leave by refusing to allow the use of annual leave when sick leave has been exhausted, leaving the employee with no option but to take leave without pay. He refused to allow an employee to have a few hours of leave restored when he spent several hours calling in to solve a complex technical problem during a vacation abroad. He has told employees that they could not enter any leave in the system unless he approved it first. He requires nonessential, non-teleworking employees to be present at the workplace when the Government is closed for inclement weather. Indeed, his Baltimore staff was required to report for duty although the building in which they worked was closed. He provides untruthful information. For example, he told employees in Baltimore that VACO was open during Hurricane Sandy even though it was shut down.

He chastises employees who go above and beyond basic requirements. He reprimands employees for being too proactive, and he appears to believe that those who show initiative are trying to unseat him. Moreover, (b) (6) IT expertise is very outdated. Rather than working to improve his skills, he spends many hours each day in his office spying on employees and working on the EEO complaints he has filed because he has not been promoted to a GS-15 position, to which he feels entitled.

(b) (6) does not practice ICARE. He fails at Integrity due to his lack of professionalism, unacceptable behavior, and severe lack of trust. He does not display Commitment, Advocacy, or Excellence, as apparent from the foregoing discussion. For example, he discourages teamwork and ingenuity, which would likely advance VA’s mission and benefit VA’s Veteran clientele. Furthermore, he does not show Respect, as exemplified by his bullying behavior and physical intimidation. (b) (6) is not mindful of the VA Core Characteristics. In particular, he has not internalized the concepts of Quality, Innovative, and Agile by generating high turnover, discouraging enterprising employees, disapproving of collaboration, and failing to maintain his own technical expertise.

MyVA entails a Veteran-centric outlook that includes mobilizing all available resources for the benefit of VA’s customers. These resources include VA employees (b) (6). (b) (6) not only underutilizes this resource, but he creates an environment of fear, intimidation, and discouragement that prevents VA employees from working effectively for the sake of Veterans.

The Union was assured that (b) (6) direct supervisor and the one above her, (b) (6) and (b) (6) respectively, are well aware of (b) (6) numerous deficiencies but have failed to act to prevent further abuses.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) was hired by (b) (6) in or about January 2011 despite her lack of success at another Federal agency. (b) (6) has since retired. The hiring of (b) (6) was a mistake of the highest order, as her reprehensible conduct and ethical shortcomings have hindered VA's mission.

Soon after arriving at VA, (b) (6) hired her best friend of more than 20 years, (b) (6). Beginning her first week of employment, (b) (6) was serving in the capacity of (b) (6) despite the fact that other employees on the team had years of seniority over her and far more relevant experience and institutional knowledge. In July 2014, (b) (6) hired (b) (6), the son of (b) (6) who had hired her. Although the younger (b) (6) holds a (b) (6) position and has been at VA only a short time, he is invited to attend senior-level meetings that are not of the type normally attended by people in his position. (b) (6) also appears to seek the advice of the younger (b) (6) on a regular basis, which is odd considering his limited experience. She also hired (b) (6), who had previously been her (b) (6). More about (b) (6) can be found below. (b) (6) treats (b) (6), the younger (b) (6), (b) (6), and a few other select employees well, allowing them special privileges. For example, she allows a small group of employees to work outside of the 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. official timeframe on week days in exchange for compensatory time.

The majority of (b) (6) employees are not faring well. Immediately upon assuming her position, (b) (6) did away with compressed work schedules (CWS) that had been in place prior to her arrival, she got rid of telework despite the fact that a telework agreement was in place, and she forced part-time employees to return to full-time work. Her employees, who enjoyed a certain level of flexibility through CWS, telework, and part-time arrangements were made to adhere to a strict 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. schedule. Even minor tardiness is not tolerated; for example, employees who are no more than 15 minutes late are compelled to take either paid or unpaid leave. Staying an extra 15 minutes at the end of the day to make up for tardiness is not permitted. Similarly, employees who must depart before 4:30 p.m. are compelled to use leave. (b) (6) does not allow them to report to work before the start of the official tour of duty in order to put in a full day's work. (b) (6) instructs a loyal underling, (b) (6), to take attendance and to monitor employees' desks every 15 minutes to make sure all are present. Whoever is not at his or her desk is docked pay. Employees must request permission to use the bathroom. They must return from lunch by 1:30 p.m. Returning even five minutes past 1:30 p.m. results in a lecture.

(b) (6) is so petty that she enforces a dress code and inspects employees' attire and footwear on a daily basis. Anyone she considered to be in violation of the dress code is called into her office for a verbal reprimand. More troubling, though, is her pathological lack of empathy toward employees. One example is when she mandated that an employee return to a full-time schedule shortly after (b) (6)

(b) (6) requiring as much parental involvement as possible. (b) (6) expressly told the employee that failure to adhere to the new work schedule would result in corrective action. Further, (b) (6) required an employee to be present at the office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the day of that employee's longstanding and regularly recurring medical appointment. The physician that the employee had been seeing for years did not have an opening on the day of the week that (b) (6) would permit leave. As such, the employee had to find a different doctor who could see her on a recurring basis on the day of the week prescribed by (b) (6).

(b) (6) staff is discouraged from interacting. When (b) (6) discovers a conversation between employees, even when work related, she becomes upset and instructs the employees to direct work-related questions to her exclusively. Besides preventing collaboration, she creates other barriers to success. For example, she redistributes assignments that are already overdue and penalizes the newly assigned employees for turning in untimely work.

(b) (6) routinely talks down to people, belittles and mocks them, and engages in behavior that could only be described as harassment. She shouts and has created an environment that is hostile, unprofessional, demeaning, and alienating. Since her arrival, nine employees have left their positions. The Union emphasizes that during her tenure, she hired two GS-14s. One left after two weeks, the other after three months. The latter employee was a Veteran who could not tolerate her obnoxious and abusive behavior. Several of (b) (6) staff members are on medication for depression and anxiety as well as for hypertension. Most of the team has sought counseling through the Employee Assistance Program due to stress generated by (b) (6). Employees report to work filled with dread and anxiety. Morale is poor, and an employee told the Union that (b) (6) office resembles a prison ward.

Professionally, (b) (6) has developed practices that needlessly encumber and complicate the certification process for acquisition professionals (her office's customers). The process should be routine. Nonetheless, she demands extensive information in applicant resumes detailing experience in project management, a practice not required by OFPP policy. In fact, if an applicant has the required training, a resume that describes and meets the required experience, and supervisory endorsement of the resume, then the requirements for approval are met. The practice of sending applications back to customers multiple times demanding more and more information regarding their experience is simply outrageous, as (b) (6) office is supposed to facilitate the certification process to support the acquisition workforce. (b) (6) does the opposite, however. Moreover, her instructions and requirements change regularly and without warning. Day to day, employees do not know what expectations will be. As well, (b) (6) does not put instructions in writing, and different directions are given to different employees all of whom perform the same function.

(b) (6) defies ICARE at every turn. Her engagement in cronyism and favoritism shows her lack of Integrity. She has no Commitment to VA's mission as demonstrated by her mistreatment of Veterans and other employees in her organization. She does not

practice Advocacy by not advancing the interests of her organization's customers, and ignores the Excellence component of ICARE as shown by her unclear and ever changing policies that cause unnecessary delays to the work of acquisition professionals. Finally, and most saliently, she fails miserably in connection with Respect. Her behavior and office policies are toxic, demeaning, and hostile and more suited to a correctional facility environment than to a professional setting with dedicated employees.

As to VA Core Characteristics, (b) (6) is vastly deficient. The Union notes that she is not Trustworthy as apparent from the cronyism she practices and the overtime policies she permits. Quality suffers under her leadership, as her so-called policies and practices cause inconsistencies and needless delays. Finally, she does not appear Innovative or Agile, as her dictates are controlling and rigid and prohibit collaboration.

(b) (6) has not studied the MyVA initiative. She micromanages and directs employees to such an unreasonable degree that they either leave the organization or retreat in misery. One employee told the Union to let Bob know that dedicated VA employees are considering walking away due to continuous harassment. The stress that she imposes and the harsh, toxic environment she creates prevents employees from working effectively. They cannot flourish and do their best work in an atmosphere that is harshly restrictive and oppressive, that leaves no room for resourcefulness and ingenuity, and where employees do not feel valued. The Union points out that the lack of employees' ability to engage in teamwork doubtlessly has prevented efficiency and innovation, as team members do not derive the benefits of professional collaboration.

Upper management, to include (b) (6) has been aware of (b) (6) egregious behavior for a long time. Indeed, the Veteran and (b) (6) who left his position within 90 days of being hired described (b) (6) conduct during his exit interview with (b) (6). Moreover, (b) (6) is well aware of (b) (6) practices through Union grievances filed against (b) (6). Nevertheless, (b) (6) has neglected to take any corrective action whatsoever. (b) (6) has been characterized as an aloof, disengaged, and disconnected manager who refuses to confront situations that might cause her discomfort, awkwardness, or unease.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) rose to that position very quickly after taking a GS-14 position at VACO in 2013. She is ill prepared to serve in such a senior post, and she either chooses to ignore policy or is ignorant of it. In any event, employees in her department are unhappy and some have suffered tremendously due to her refusal to respect their rights and wellbeing. (b) (6) is removed and aloof and does little to nothing to improve the situation of those who work for her. Indeed, at times, it appears that she cannot be bothered with any managerial inconvenience. It also seems that she does not have

sufficient technical expertise at least with respect to auditing about which she knows very little. Thus, she does not understand the work of some of her employees.

When (b) (6) assumed her current position in early 2014, an employee advised her of a report by the VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD), a component within VHA charged with promoting organizational health. Indeed, in August 2013, the NCOD issued a scathing report about the office, which likely led to the retirement of (b) (6) predecessor, (b) (6), who announced his retirement not long after the report was released. In any event, after the report was issued in August 2013, NCOD began to hold regular meetings in order to facilitate the creation of a healthier organizational climate; at some point, the regular meetings stopped. Thus, on meeting with (b) (6) in early 2014, the employee asked (b) (6) when the meetings with NCOD would resume. (b) (6) indicated that she would need time to consider the matter, yet she had not resumed the NCOD meetings and did nothing to improve hostile management practices that led to employee dissatisfaction. Thus, in July 2014, the employee again inquired about NCOD meetings. Subsequently, (b) (6) arranged one further NCOD meeting and then asserted that she did not see the utility of NCOD intervention. (b) (6) observation is puzzling, as progress consistent with NCOD findings would have required ongoing meetings for an extended period.

Aside from a general disinterest in organizational health, (b) (6) ignores and even violates regulations and policy regarding leave, telework, and reasonable accommodations for employees with documented disabilities. The Union notes that some of the employees requesting accommodations are Veterans with service-connected disabilities. She sits on requests for reasonable accommodations and advance sick leave for unreasonable periods and sometimes ignores them altogether. Rather than accommodating dedicated and valuable professionals (auditors and accountants) who would like to perform their jobs, she compels them to cut their hours, take leave without pay, and suffer the consequences of what she characterizes as using “too much leave.” (b) (6) could accommodate disabled employees’ needs by allowing telework as a reasonable accommodation and permitting more flexible schedules that would reduce the need for using leave. Instead, she creates barriers, ignores regulations and policy, and creates needless burdens for skilled employees who would be able to contribute even more if their special needs were accommodated. From Union discussions, no disabled employee made an *unreasonable* request for accommodations.

(b) (6) is indifferent to the plight of her employees in other ways. There is a lack of transparency, and she turns a blind eye to blatant harassment that takes place on her watch. The most glaring example is that of (b) (6), the (b) (6) who serves immediately beneath her. (b) (6) yells and shouts at employees, behaves inappropriately toward women, and is the subject of numerous EEO complaints. He is discussed further in a separate entry. However, (b) (6) silence and inaction with respect to (b) (6) epitomizes her poor managerial skills and lack of interest in employee wellbeing and organizational health. (b) (6) has indicated that there were only a limited number of battles she could fight and that taking measures to deal

with (b) (6) was not a battle she was willing to undertake. She has been said to take the path of least resistance at employee expense.

In January 2015, an employee suggested outreach to Veterans who were over 65. (b) (6) (b) (6) said, "Maybe we don't want them in the system at the present time." The employee asked whether there would be a better time to reach out to aging Veterans. (b) (6) (b) (6) simply shrugged. She has shown disregard for Veterans in other ways. She has subordinates who are Veterans with service-connected disabilities, yet she ignores their service-connected disabilities, the impact of which she could ease by permitting common-sense accommodations.

(b) (6) superior, (b) (6), a recipient of handsome performance bonuses, is aware of many if not all of (b) (6) failings yet has taken no corrective action.

(b) (6) does not adhere to ICARE values. The Union does not believe that (b) (6) (b) (6) has sufficient Integrity, as she does not adhere to the highest professional standards by failing to follow regulations and procedures regarding employee rights. She appears to lack Commitment to Veterans by remarks reflecting indifference to the needs of Veterans to include those working for her. Her neglect of Veterans in her very presence shows that she does not adhere to the Advocacy component of ICARE. Respect is deficient, as depicted by (b) (6) unresponsiveness to employee concerns.

Finally, her office is not run with Excellence in mind. The toxic environment she engenders and enables is not of the type conducive to outstanding work, thereby also frustrating the MyVA initiative, which seeks to empower employees to be resourceful and enterprising in performing their duties. As to the VA Core Characteristics, she is primarily lacking in the Quality and Agile aspects. She does not promote Quality by ignoring organizational health and failing to make efforts to promote a cohesive culture. She is not Agile in that she neglects to take swift action when necessary.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) is a disgrace. The Union has heard complaints from several of (b) (6) (b) (6) subordinates detailing outrageous behavior. His many shortcomings are specifically documented in an August 2013 NCOD report, which he has not heeded. He is obsequious to his superiors and oppressive to his subordinates.

The NCOD report points to strained relationships between (b) (6) and employees. He has a tendency to shout at employees. He fixates on minutiae and criticizes trivialities instead of focusing on the overall quality of employee work product. He fails to listen and frequently interrupts, preventing any kind of productive exchange. Rather than running operations in a timely manner, he operates in crisis mode. Despite many specific findings by a neutral body that took into account the views of all concerned parties, (b) (6) (b) (6) has indicated that there was nothing wrong or inappropriate about his behavior,

that he did not have to adjust his conduct, and that he simply did not accept the feedback. (b) (6) lack of insight is troubling.

(b) (6) communicates in a confrontational manner. As stated, he interrupts his subordinates and does not permit them an opportunity to explain themselves. He engages in gas-lighting by twisting facts, thereby causing confusion and anxiety, and is dishonest in his dealings with employees. It appears that his main goal is to paint himself in a positive light to his superiors. When he engages with them, he is ultra-attentive and charming.

(b) (6) takes advantage of others to achieve his own goals, seeks admiration and approval, exaggerates personal achievements while minimizes those of others, is quick to display anger, often feels slighted, and is untruthful. He blames mistakes on others and never takes responsibility for his own mistakes. He delegates but does little work himself. He is often seen playing games on his computer.

He has a long history of harassing women. In March 2015 a female manager at the office brought her husband to work after what was described to the Union as a big blow up between her and (b) (6). Significantly, this was not the first time she brought her husband to work. Apparently, she did not feel safe with (b) (6) because he had been harassing her. In the recent past, she took a long leave of absence due to (b) (6) behavior toward her. Also in March 2015, an EEO complaint was filed against (b) (6) by a female employee for disability discrimination, harassment, and a hostile work environment. Many other complaints have been filed against him. Most if not all of the complaints were filed by women. In addition to the several EEO complaints filed against him in recent years, women have sought protective orders to keep him at a distance.

The Union does not need to go into great detail to show that (b) (6) does not possess any of VA's Core Values. He has no Integrity and is incapable of working in an office with women. Clearly, he does not have Commitment to VA's mission. Rather, his need for self-aggrandizement trumps other concerns. By neglecting to run an efficient operation that is focused on organizational goals, he does not show Advocacy. Unquestionably, Respect is absent. He does not value others and actively shows a disregard for women. Finally, there are many factors contributing to a lack of Excellence, such as hostility and a refusal to accept constructive criticism.

(b) (6) abhorrent behavior and disordered personality prevent him from internalizing VA's Core Characteristics. He does not heed the VA Core Characteristics by failing to be Trustworthy in his dealings with employees. His haphazard, last-minute management style diminishes the Quality of his output. His harassment and inability to listen prevents employees from being Innovative and Agile.

Finally, the Agency cannot reach its MyVA initiative goals by continuing to allow managers like (b) (6) whose hostile and dysfunctional personality does not promote employees' best work. The employees with whom the Union spoke came to VA out of a desire to serve Veterans. They are devoted to VA's mission, yet their ability to

contribute is diminished by the roadblocks to success propagated by (b) (6) maladaptive conduct.

(b) (6)

The Union is concerned about (b) (6) performance as a high-level executive. She is highly paid and a regular recipient of generous bonuses, yet she shirks her supervisory responsibilities by failing to take action to correct severe misconduct by lower-level supervisors. Her passivity and tendency to sweep problems under the rug cause outrages of which she is well aware to continue unabated. (b) (6) conduct was described as ostrich-like by several (b) (6) employees who indicated that as long as the trains were running on time, she tended to overlook problems. (b) (6) is aware, or should be aware, of problems within her purview through EEO complaints, Union grievances, and the like. So long as there is no readily apparent calamity requiring immediate attention, however, she takes no action. She deals with crises, not with root causes.

The Union understands that (b) (6) reacts in two types of situations. She takes action when there are witnesses or outside pressure. Otherwise, she buries her head in the sand.

(b) (6) most egregious inaction has to do with (b) (6), who is the subject of a separate entry herein. (b) (6) supervises (b) (6), whose abuses are legendary. Instead of taking corrective action, however, she ignores (b) (6) misdeeds and sweeps up after him. The Union finds (b) (6) acquiescence peculiar. For at least three years, she has been shielding a man who displays disturbing personality traits and who actively promotes an intolerable work environment that detracts from VA's mission. When events rise to crisis level, she might place an employee under (b) (6) on a detail or at a different post permanently or she might assist an employee in returning to a former job. (b) (6), however, emerges unscathed.

The Union was advised that when it came time to hire employees to replace those who had left (b) (6) group, hiring was delayed due to a dispute between (b) (6) and VA Human Resources in Austin over whether the newly hired employees would be part of the bargaining unit. (b) (6) did not wish for the new employees to have Union protections, as such protections make her job more challenging. The delay in hiring new Action Officers until October 2014 led to extreme stress and a high workload for existing staff.

In characteristic fashion, (b) (6) is oblivious to ICARE. She has direct supervisory power over a subordinate who lacks any form of Integrity but chooses to overlook his wrongful actions. By supporting someone who lacks Integrity, she too lacks it. Her passivity and remarkable indifference to problems within her sphere of authority reveal a lack of Commitment. Ignoring the plight of employees reliant on her for protection from abuse demonstrates that she does not Respect employees or the Veterans they serve. (b) (6) perpetuation of an intolerable situation does not depict the sort of Excellence demanded by ICARE.

(b) (6) is not mindful of the VA Core Characteristics, although she must have been informed of them given that she is a high-level executive. She is not Trustworthy because she cannot be counted upon to do what is right. She is not Innovative, as she presides over an environment that is antithetical to curiosity, initiative, and creative contributions from employees. She is not Agile in that she does not adapt quickly to challenges and ignores them until such moment when some form of remedial action can no longer be avoided.

As well, she has not heeded the MyVA initiative because many of the employees working beneath her are oppressed rather than empowered to work, act, and think critically. Her employees are an agency resource, yet to the detriment of VA's customers, she wastefully underutilizes this valuable resource through neglect.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) is one of VA's top executives, and the agency should expect outstanding performance from him. As matters stand, however, he runs a dysfunctional organization and does not appear to be taking the necessary steps to correct deficiencies.

There seem to be many unsatisfactory managers at (b) (6). The Union has provided a sampling in this report to include, but not limited to, (b) (6) and (b) (6). (b) (6) is well aware of their deficiencies. With respect to (b) (6), the Union can find no reason to believe that he is not aware of her retreating role, entailing action only in absolute crises, and of her failure to rein in (b) (6), who terrorizes underlings to the point of illness. Turning to (b) (6), he has been aware of her incompetence but transferred her from senior position to senior position within (b) (6) instead of letting her go when her incompetence first came to his attention. Further, he instructed high-level employees working under her to read *Throwing the Elephant: Zen and the Art of Managing Up* by Stanley Bing when they reached out to him for help. (b) (6) told them shortly before they resigned in unison in January 2015 that they would have to learn to manage their manager and indicated that he would take no remedial action regarding (b) (6). (b) (6) refusal to intercede on behalf of these impressive senior employees caused them to leave VA and seek their fortunes elsewhere. Oddly, (b) (6) refused to utter (b) (6) name while meeting with the senior staff members who resigned in January 2015.

There is a general sentiment that (b) (6) will throw subordinates under the bus. He is not known for offering clear guidance or supporting his staff. Thus, over the past few years, a significant number of talented, senior-level (b) (6) officials have resigned. In the past 30 months, at least 14 have departed meaning that executive turnover within this time period has been over 60 percent. For example, in July 2014, the (b) (6), resigned her post without another position waiting. The next (b) (6), gave two weeks' notice on April 15, 2015. He announced his resignation some nine months after

accepting this (b) (6) position. Both (b) (6) and (b) (6) reported directly to (b) (6). (b) (6) is the second largest division in (b) (6) and is chiefly responsible for the development, testing, and fielding of (b) (6).

(b) (6) does not have a long term vision. Local (b) (6) are short on staff, funds, direction, resources, and input from VACO. At some point in 2013, (b) (6) suspended monthly calls with the regional (b) (6), thereby ending strategic communication. When he does communicate, he pounds his fists on the table, shouts, and swears when he does not get what he wants.

(b) (6), has been (b) (6). Apparently, (b) (6) is not happy because he desired the position of (b) (6) indefinitely. He indicated to others, however, that he was a “survivor” and would see the rest of the senior (b) (6) officials in the grave asserting that that he would outlast them all.

(b) (6) is featured as one of VA’s senior leaders on the VA website. Records indicate that he has a history of receiving large bonuses in addition to a high salary. In exchange for respectable compensation and recognition, one would expect him to provide the type of service that actually merits his level of pay and public acknowledgement. It appears, however, that (b) (6) sole interest is self-preservation.

Under the tenets of ICARE, (b) (6) should exhibit much more allegiance to his organization. He shows a lack of Integrity when he allows problematic or entirely unfit executives to remain in their posts and when he fails to support employees seeking the type of assistance that only he can provide. In terms of Commitment, he seems committed only to his own interests. Certainly, this report reflects major problems in (b) (6). There is no indication that (b) (6) has taken any steps to correct the trouble at (b) (6). He himself does not give sufficient direction and does not support employee concerns. Clearly, therefore, his performance does not rise to the level of Commitment and Advocacy mandated in ICARE. His lack of concern for employee wellbeing and unprofessional conduct reveal a lack of Respect. Finally, he does not strive for Excellence as apparent from the mass exodus of capable senior staff and the retention of incompetent managers such as (b) (6).

(b) (6) is not making any effort to adhere to the VA Core Characteristics. The lack of Quality is obvious from the hiring and retention of incompetents. Additionally, he does not promote the Innovative element by ignoring the concerns of well-intentioned senior employees.

(b) (6) leadership does not comport with the MyVA goal of putting the Veteran first, which is sorely lacking in an organization such as (b) (6) that has the types of problems detailed above and many others that are beyond the scope of this report.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) assumed his position at the (b) (6) in 2012. Immediately upon his arrival and under the direction of (b) (6), he did away with an established telework program and compressed work schedules (CWS), detracting from employee flexibility and the ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance. The Union notes that many of (b) (6) subordinates are Veterans reentering the civilian workforce. Some of these Veterans have service-connected disabilities. These employees require some leeway in order to take care of personal matters to include medical problems. The abrupt and arbitrary decision to do away with telework and CWS had a negative impact upon employees. After much protest from staff, CWS was reinstated. Telework was not. The Union was advised that service-connected Veteran employees with reasonable accommodation agreements have also been removed from telework and made to return to the office despite documented medical advice indicating that a return to the office was ill-advised. Their positions were also ideally suited for telework.

VA policy is to promote telework to the maximum extent possible. (b) (6) permit telework during government shutdowns for emergencies or inclement weather, which is a benefit to the Agency, but do not allow employees to benefit from regularly scheduled telework. Most of their employees show up as teleworkers or *ad hoc* teleworkers in the system when in reality most are not on any telework agreement. Nonetheless, (b) (6) report on a regular basis that 90% of (b) (6) employees telework regularly.

In addition to interfering with telework and CWS, (b) (6), presumably under the direction of (b) (6), suspended training. As such, his subordinates cannot keep up certifications necessary to perform their jobs and to maintain credibility with customers. Some are now working without appropriate certifications, which diminishes the employees' ability to wield influence in discussions with contractors and business owners. He has also suspended travel, which helps employees with their duties and assists them in obtaining further work. In the meantime, (b) (6) himself participates in multiple training opportunities and travels a great deal.

Since 2012, approximately seven EEO complaints have been filed against (b) (6) for harassment, hostile work environment, etc. Furthermore, the Union has been advised that employees who voice complaints are publicly humiliated in a manner suggesting to other employees that they too will be subjected to public ridicule if they dare complain. There is strong evidence that employees who voice informal complaints or file formal ones face retaliation, to include increased work assignments, threats of disciplinary action, denial of leave, and the like. Indeed, due to constant intimidation from (b) (6) and the (b) (6) under his direction, there has been extremely high turnover. As things stand, (b) (6) has 23 project managers, two of whom are on details in the hopes of reassignment, and nine supervisors and managers. (b) (6)

are both (b) (6). There are also four (b) (6) and three supervisory (b) (6). Why (b) (6) believes he needs nine people to manage 23 is a mystery that might only be attributable to inadequate managerial skills.

(b) (6) does not communicate effectively with staff. He asserts that he has an open door policy when his door is ajar, but his door and blinds are shut almost all of the time. When he does interact with staff, he often yells and speaks rudely, although his non-managerial staff is composed primarily of Veterans. There are no staff meetings and no briefings after his trips to the field. Staff members interact with him only when they have documents requiring his signature. (b) (6) does not provide clear guidance and memorializes no policies and procedures, which compels employees to walk the halls searching for answers. Furthermore, processes change depending of (b) (6) mood.

The Union's discussion has centered on (b) (6), as (b) (6) is more removed from non-management employees, and they have less direct contact with him. However, (b) (6) has taken no action to initiate improvements for (b) (6) staff, and because he presides over an organization with a shockingly high rate of resignations and a seemingly wasteful and inefficient management structure, he is complicit in the dysfunction of (b) (6) office and is responsible for (b) (6) mismanagement in general.

ICARE should inform all supervisory actions. (b) (6) explicitly ignore the ICARE mandate as evident from the ill-treatment faced by the many Veterans in their organization. Surely, an environment of harassment and intimidation of Veterans does not reflect Integrity. They lack Commitment by showing a clear disregard for Veterans to include their professional development. (b) (6) does not promote Advocacy as contemplated in ICARE. Indeed, an office that is so poorly run with such high turnover cannot achieve the Advocacy component of ICARE. The Union need not detail how little Respect is shown by (b) (6), as the foregoing discussion depicts a general atmosphere of disrespect, fear, and intimidation. Excellence is missing due to the missing guidance, unclear policies and procedures, and a refusal to allow for necessary professional development.

(b) (6) should also be guided by the VA Core Characteristics. They fail in several measures to include Trustworthy by showing a complete disregard for employees. Similarly, their failure to cultivate their employees through training and clear guidance detracts from the expected VA Core Characteristics of Quality, Innovative, and Agile, which necessitate a nurtured workforce.

Moreover, (b) (6) do not support the MyVA initiative by running a top-heavy organization that does not articulate clear policies and procedures. Such an organization cannot possibly put Veterans first. Likewise, neglecting to empower employees to do their jobs effectively works against the interests of the Veterans VA is intended to serve.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) abuses are legendary. He is grandiose, distrustful, jealous, vengeful, manipulative, resentful, and vicious. He spreads rumors, reveals employee confidences, harasses subordinates, is intolerant, orchestrates conflict, engages in questionable employment practices, and ruins careers. He is rude, disparaging, and makes unsubstantiated accusations. Someone with a disordered personality such as his should not be allowed to walk through agency doors. Nevertheless, he is thriving under the auspices of (b) (6), an executive who is the subject of a separate entry herein.

The Union has heard from current and former employees of (b) (6), all of whom have been consistent in describing his disturbed nature. Ultimately, and without fail, they seek new positions, details, or simply quit their jobs in order to escape him. One of (b) (6) employees, a Veteran who was recently transferred to another (b) (6) position after years of abuse, jumps whenever the phone rings thinking it might be (b) (6). Another employee displayed physical manifestations of abuse when he was found crying and vomiting in the restroom following an interaction with (b) (6).

(b) (6) tends to have certain favorites whom he enlists to do his bidding. The list of favorites constantly evolves. While an employee is in (b) (6) favor, that employee is pressured into doing (b) (6) dirty work. For example, when (b) (6) wanted to catch an employee in wrongdoing, he enlisted a subordinate to report as to when that person left the office. When it was reported to him that the targeted employee remained at the office until the very end of his tour of duty, (b) (6) uttered an obscenity to express disappointment. Similarly, he had a subordinate falsely suggest to new hires that signing a telework agreement was mandatory even for those who expressly stated that they did not wish to telework. (b) (6) did not intend to have these employees telework. He simply wanted telework agreements in place in order to compel these employees to work during government closures.

(b) (6) spreads unfounded rumors. He began to spread salacious rumors about a service-connected Veteran who worked for him, which caused her a great deal of distress and exacerbated a service-connected disability. In addition to spreading false rumors about her, he did not respect her privacy. The employee realized that (b) (6) had her on speaker phone during a telephone conversation with him that she had assumed was private. During the conversation, however, there was another person in (b) (6) office who was privy to the entire conversation. In an attempt to unsettle this employee, he placed her in the same office with a colleague with whom there had been conflict and continued to force this employee to work with this particular colleague on numerous assignments. (b) (6) told others that he was forcing these two employees to work together because he wanted to watch them “destroy each other.” As stated, (b) (6) behavior caused this Veteran’s service-connected disability to worsen to the point that the employee ended up at the VA hospital. During the first day of hospitalization, (b) (6) began sending messages to the employee’s private email account demanding a doctor’s note. After the hospitalization, the service-connected Veteran/employee managed to get placed on a detail. The fact that this employee was no longer working for

him did not deter (b) (6), as he tried to derail the employee's promotion. Because (b) (6) continued pursuit and harassment was exacerbating her service-connected disability, this employee quit her position at VA before securing another position, resulting in great economic hardship. This Veteran/employee wanted to serve other Veterans but was driven away by (b) (6).

(b) (6) reveals confidences and ridicules others. As stated, he often puts his phone on speaker without telling the employee on the other end of the line that they are on speaker and that people other than him are in the room. Other times, he speaks publicly of personal employee matters that are revealed to him in confidence.

(b) (6) has made disparaging remarks about a subordinate whom he suspected of being gay. In addition to revealing prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation, (b) (6) is intolerant of differences in culture and national origin. For example, he berates employees who might greet each other in Spanish or exchange pleasantries in Spanish with the cleaning staff. When he does not like an employee, he yells and uses obscenities and assigns tasks that are impossible to complete in the time allotted. When the employee inevitably fails, (b) (6) begins adverse personnel actions.

(b) (6) ridicules people in a way that is not only unprofessional but cruel. For example, he told others that an applicant for a job had his children call and email continuously to see whether their father would be hired. In fact, the applicant, who had already been hired, was abroad attending to a family emergency and for that reason had his children handle necessary communications with (b) (6) while he was several time zones away. On another occasion, he told an in-favor employee that he was planning on getting rid of another employee. (b) (6) stated, "I'm gonna get him out of here, but if you repeat that, I will deny it."

Because of high turnover, his team is consistently short staffed. Thus, those remaining are under undue stress trying to complete an amount of work intended for far more people. The remaining employees are often compelled to work unpaid overtime in order to complete assignments. They are instructed, however, not to send emails outside of duty time in order to avoid the appearance of unpaid overtime. By the summer of 2014, (b) (6) had only two employees compared to nine a year earlier. The two employees were working nights and weekends to complete their work without additional pay. Instead of being thanked, the remaining employees were harassed via emails intended to intimidate and threaten. (b) (6) employees are in constant fear of being disciplined or terminated.

(b) (6) ostracizes those who express disagreement. One employee who escaped to another position at VA was once (b) (6) right-hand helper. There was an impression by all incoming hires that she was (b) (6) deputy. She arranged interviews and performed tasks that were somewhat managerial. In reality, she was only a GS-9. She fell out of favor with (b) (6) when she began to express her opinions and ideas. He retaliated by challenging her leave requests made pursuant to urgent family matters and causing her other problems.

Another employee had been a favorite of (b) (6) for several months thereafter. This employee was shown personal emails from staff, heard (b) (6) ridicule subordinates, and observed him scheming to make life miserable for those he disliked. This new favorite employee, who has since been removed from his perch, was not a manager but had access to human resources information, work product, time sheets, and the like. When this employee inevitably fell out of favor, (b) (6) instructed the new favorite to go through his desk in the hope of finding evidence against him. The Union, in fact, was advised that (b) (6) had altered this out-of-favor employee's performance appraisal for FY14 three times as late as April or May 2015. The employee only heard about these amended performance appraisals through automated eOPF update notifications. These new performance appraisals appear to have been signed by the employee who indicated to the Union that he had no knowledge of the new performance appraisals until after they occurred and did not sign them, leaving the distinct impression that (b) (6) forged the employee's signature on more than one occasion.

(b) (6) subordinates know that he betrays confidences, gossips, spreads rumors, encourages snitching, and engages in other disruptive behavior. Such an atmosphere leads to stress, paranoia, low morale, and inefficiency. One does not know where one stands with (b) (6) or one's co-workers. (b) (6) subordinates do not know whom to trust. They cannot rely on each other and are always fearful of being betrayed by a colleague.

According to employees, (b) (6) conducts himself with such a sense of authority that others think he is an (b) (6). He does not disabuse them of this notion despite the fact that he is a (b) (6). (b) (6) has three sub groups one of which he heads. The other two are headed by more senior employees one of whom is a (b) (6) and the other who is an (b) (6). (b) (6) has expressed jealousy and resentment, as he believes that he too merits a higher rank. Indeed, he displays unmistakable grandiosity. For example, he makes statements such as "Heavy is the head that wears the crown" or "I'm the mayor of this town" without any hint of irony.

When an employee falls out of favor and (b) (6) determines that he wishes to rid himself of that employee, he launches a comprehensive psychological assault, which includes short-turnaround assignments, an unreasonable workload requiring many hours of unpaid overtime to complete, unwarranted scrutiny, and an unceasing battery of petty, unreasonable, or arbitrary accusations in written form. The situation created is one that the employee will not be able to tolerate for long and one in which success is impossible. Ultimately, the targeted employee either resigns or manages to find another position within the organization as far away as possible from (b) (6).

All of the employees with whom the Union spoke complained to (b) (6) about (b) (6) abuses. She rarely helps unless the situation becomes explosive. She helped one of (b) (6) employees get his old job back at a different agency after (b) (6) came close to striking him. Before he was able to leave VA for his old job, he was placed on a detail away from (b) (6). Nonetheless, (b) (6) was scrutinizing

his time cards in an effort to catch him committing time card fraud. The employee complained to (b) (6) who indicated that she would not take any remedial action against (b) (6) because, as she stated, “You’re gone.”

Pursuant to an employee complaint to the Secretary’s office, an investigation was ordered. (b) (6), a VA human resources specialist, began an investigation in approximately early March 2015. At the outset, according to employees, he seemed very enthusiastic. His fervor appears to have diminished, and there is no indication that he is being diligent with the investigation. He did not follow up with matters he should have acted upon. For example, he assured current employees that he would interview former employees who left VA because of (b) (6) abuses; to date, however, it does not appear that he contacted these former employees, one of whom quit her job before securing another position because working under (b) (6) was intolerable.

The Union has been advised that two Action Officers working under (b) (6) who were supposed to speak with (b) (6) were sent to training during the time when (b) (6) was conducting interviews. The scheduling of such training is particularly odd because no Action Officer other than the one working directly for the (b) (6) travelled or took out-of-the-office training in at least two years.

(b) (6) has no respect for VA’s ICARE values. He has absolutely no Integrity, as obvious from the extensive description of his job performance above, which includes rumors, gossip, harassment, surveillance, and disrespect for employees’ privacy. His Commitment is not to the Veterans, as evident from his abuse of a former employee who was a Veteran with service-connected disabilities. Advocacy is completely absent, as (b) (6) spends his days scheming rather than producing Veteran-centric work. Although he might be fawning and servile when interacting with his superiors, he does not Respect his staff and is not in any way concerned about their wellbeing. Finally, Excellence is elusive in an environment of fear, intimidation, and paranoia that one employee described as “Stasi like.”

The VA Core Characteristics are completely ignored. (b) (6) is not Trustworthy as reflected by his underhanded behavior, to include revealing employee confidences. He does not ensure Quality when he drives employees away one by one. When the work is reassigned it is either to a new employee or to one who is already overworked due to the ongoing departures of colleagues. (b) (6) is too busy plotting, and the employees too oppressed, to allow for any Innovation. Similarly, his group is not Agile due to the sheer amount of misery and the consequent turnover.

(b) (6) does not seek to follow the MyVA initiative. He is self-focused rather than Veteran centric. Moreover, his senselessly abusive management techniques do not promote employee autonomy, creativity, or empowerment to the detriment of Veterans.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) and her subordinate (b) (6) are based in (b) (6). The Union has no information from employees at the (b) (6) facility. Rather, the Union received very unfavorable information from employees based in the District of Columbia (hereinafter “District”). (b) (6) and (b) (6) create a hostile work environment for their employees in the District, most if not all of whom are African American. There is a perception among the staff based in the District that (b) (6) and (b) (6) neither like nor respect African Americans. Certain racially-oriented comments were overheard giving rise to this perception.

(b) (6) moved two of her three GS-14s to (b) (6). Vacant positions are being filled in (b) (6) office, and it appears that her plan is to move all of the District positions to (b) (6). (b) (6) sends staff from (b) (6) to the District office to report back regarding which positions to target for transfer to (b) (6). She has created barriers to training for District-based employees by organizing training that is unreasonably far away and taking other unfavorable action. Hardly any bonus money is awarded to District-based employees. Needless to say, employees based in the District have low morale and feel very uncomfortable coming to work.

(b) (6), as one employee recounted, engages in union busting. She makes efforts to remove employees from the Bargaining Unit by altering position descriptions for employees who do not perform any managerial functions. Employees who are newly hired into positions similar to those of Bargaining Unit employees are improperly coded outside of the Bargaining Unit. She discourages Union membership in other ways as well.

Her behavior toward employees, at least the ones in the District, is deplorable. She screams when upset and whenever she is questioned. She does not merely shout but has actual tantrums and employs street language to express her rage. She actively retaliates against employees who file grievances. Moreover, employees in the District are discouraged from speaking to (b) (6) directly, but she forbids communication with her superiors. Thus, she makes it impossible for employees to voice concerns.

Despite trying to move operations to (b) (6), (b) (6) has been resistant and even hostile to the notion of telework. She has made the process for arranging telework cumbersome, and she holds up the telework paperwork for months, although she herself teleworks frequently.

The staff based in the District is overworked due to staffing shortages. Perhaps due to physical remoteness or lack of effective communication, (b) (6) believes that the District-based employees are not sufficiently busy. She assigns new work, much of which has been described as “busy work,” which is overwhelming. Furthermore, she

takes no steps to recognize the actual duties performed by District-based staff that should in some instances qualify employees for promotions.

Her staff members are miserable and harassed due to her objectionable behavior and overbearing and retaliatory management style. One employee pointed out that people who are victimized and harassed tend to make mistakes and do not perform optimally. This notion, however, is not apparent to (b) (6). Two of (b) (6) employees have died recently. One employee's cancer returned after having been in remission. Another of (b) (6) employees, a woman in her early 50's, died as well. According to employees, both were horribly mistreated. In fact, (b) (6) refused to permit the man whose cancer returned to telework, although he had done so previously. While the Union is cognizant of the fact that the causation of disease and mortality is complex and beyond the ken of the Union and (b) (6) employees, it is easy to see how some might make the connection between the return of cancer and/or death and an untenably hostile environment in the workplace.

(b) (6) also harasses employees. Those who telework receive constant email messages from her that require immediate responses. If she does not receive an immediate response, she continues to resend or "refresh" the email until she gets an answer. She forces employees to provide very detailed accounts of their daily plans and accomplishments, which reduces the time available for actual work. Thus, employees find it hard to get their work done. Also, her constant badgering causes undue stress. She is rude, abrupt, and talks over employees such that they cannot make complete statements or respond to feedback. (b) (6) does not support employees and is not available to assist them.

She is hostile to employees who have medical issues and is unsympathetic when employees with disabilities must take leave. She is particularly hostile to employees on leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). She has AWOLed employees attempting to take leave for sickness or medical issues.

The Union interviewed several employees working for (b) (6) and (b) (6). Their reports to the Union were consistent, although the Union spoke to each employee individually and on different dates. They all reported that working for (b) (6) and (b) (6) was the most miserable experience in their work lives. All of these workers have been employed for many years and have a strong basis for this opinion.

(b) (6) and (b) (6) might wear ICARE lapel pins, but they have not acquainted themselves with its meaning. There can be little Integrity in a workplace that is so hostile to employees that the deaths of colleagues are attributed to mistreatment by management. Similarly, Advocacy is absent because mistreated employees does not make for a Veteran-centric operation. The above narrative shows a fundamental lack of Respect for employees. Finally, the behaviors exhibited by (b) (6) and (b) (6) do not breed Excellence. As stated, (b) (6) badgering is disruptive and detracts from the time available to employees to perform work-related assignments.

(b) (6) and (b) (6) do not bother with VA Core Characteristics. Employees do not find them Trustworthy due to the utter lack of concern (b) (6) and (b) (6) display toward them. They disregard Quality and Innovation by failing to create the type of workplace where employees feel sufficiently safe to make suggestions and advocate for the type of work environment that would make them most productive.

The MyVA initiative strives to create a truly Veteran-centric agency that caters to the needs of Veterans. These needs change from time to time and might be unusual or novel. Employees must be empowered to act in a manner befitting the particular situation at hand. (b) (6) and (b) (6) do not empower employees. They do the opposite. The fear of harassment, retaliation, and rage paralyzes their employees and does not in any way promote better service to Veterans.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) rose to her position as (b) (6) in January 2014 following the retirement of the person who had held that position for many years. She was not fit for the job. Indeed, (b) (6) who was the (b) (6) at that time indicated explicitly in a January 2014 email that (b) (6) “may be rusty on some of the details” and asked the staff to assist her.

Despite being ill-prepared for the job, (b) (6) does not display humility. Rather, she sends harassing emails to subordinates whom she insults and treats in a derogatory and disrespectful manner. She once told a service-connected Veteran to perform or get another job when there was no sign that this service-connected Veteran had any performance issues. She has written undeserved negative comments in the performance appraisals of her subordinates whose performance was assessed very positively before (b) (6) assumed her position. She has trouble getting along with others. Moreover, she has made racist remarks about President Obama. Such comments are particularly offensive to African American staff members.

Professionally, (b) (6) is very slow to produce work. She also makes remarks such as “this is not my job” and tries to push work onto others. When the White House called to inquire regarding certain regulations she was handling, she was uncooperative with White House staff. Her subordinates voiced complaints about (b) (6) to superiors, but no corrective action was taken until the White House called them to complain. Since then, (b) (6) has been detailed to another position.

(b) (6) was promoted to a (b) (6) position when she assumed the (b) (6) role. Following inquiries from the White House, and due to the slow pace of her work, she has been detailed to a position that is not one usually occupied by a GS-14. (b) (6) has been allowed to remain a GS-14 despite the fact that her current duties are well below those of a GS-14. Her subordinates were left to perform her work while remaining at the GS-12 level. The unexplained favorable treatment of (b) (6)

causes resentment in those left to carry out her responsibilities with far lower compensation.

While (b) (6) may not wield as much power as some managers, owing to the fact that she has been detailed to a non-managerial position, the fact that she has not been disciplined for racially charged comments and continues to be compensated as a manager is a slap in the face to others in her milieu, some of whom are Veterans who work tirelessly to produce high-quality work for the benefit of the agency and the Veterans it serves.

(b) (6) performance shows that she does not adhere to ICARE. ICARE is absent in managers who are disrespectful to employees, fail to perform their duties as required, make highly distasteful remarks about the President, and whose interpersonal skills are so limited that they are unable to get along with others. One wonders why (b) (6) has not disciplined (b) (6) many deficiencies are inconsistent with the VA Core Characteristics, and especially with respect to Quality. Finally, her disregard for employees does not empower them in a manner that would advance the MyVA initiative.

(b) (6)

The Board is staffed with an army of attorneys tasked with deciding appeals of Veterans and their families. The work is intellectually challenging and the (b) (6) increasingly complex. Board attorneys are under enormous pressure to exceed production goals, which are impossible to meet in a 40-hour work week. It is an unforgiving, high-pressure environment where the consequences of missing goals can be draconian.

A few of the (b) (6) are generally liked and make genuine efforts to accommodate employees' needs. Others who have been the subject of many grievances and complaints seem to have backed away from their flawed managerial practices as a result of survey results. (b) (6), however, has chosen to ignore survey results. She is nasty, deliberately terrifying, and exercises her power with great relish. She is known to pull out her badge during routine traffic stops by police, claiming to be a (b) (6) (b) (6). In short, she uses her authority as a (b) (6) to bully staff attorneys.

(b) (6) is unreasonable, unpleasant, and tyrannical. She proceeds as though generally accepted rules do not apply to her. For example, she has threatened to remove attorneys from the telework program because they are not exceeding the quota established by management. Attorneys, of course, are under no obligation to produce more than the established goal, and teleworkers cannot be subjected to requirements not imposed on employees who do not telework. She calls meetings to "monitor" attorneys who are achieving established goals and whose work is assessed as either fully satisfactory or outstanding by the judges who review it. Although Board attorneys generally become GS-14s as a matter of course, she renders the promotion process contentious. At times, she refuses to complete the promotion paperwork on time and

does not advise attorneys regarding where they stand in terms of promotions, causing undue anxiety. Many attorneys who end up in her domain are denied promotions that are fairly standard practice elsewhere at the Board.

In subversion of federal law, (b) (6) has knowingly provided erroneous information regarding FMLA. Attorneys at the Board are entitled to take up to 16 weeks of maternity/paternity leave under FMLA. (b) (6) caused undue stress to pregnant attorneys by misinforming them that they can only substitute their accrued leave for the unpaid leave under FMLA if they produce enough cases to “cover” the time they are substituting the accrued leave. This not only violates federal law by placing a chilling effect on an eligible employee’s right to use FMLA, but causes undue stress to pregnant women working under (b) (6). (b) (6) has commented that she feels attorneys use FMLA (maternity leave) as a way to evade Fair Share requirements. The Union knows of no Board attorney who opted to conceive in order to subvert the quota. It is quite disturbing that a manager at VA, an agency charged with caring for others, has so little understanding of common life experiences.

(b) (6) sends harassing emails to attorneys who are on approved leave inquiring as to their whereabouts. Many attorneys within her purview experience stress and anxiety beyond that which is already common for Board attorneys in general. She has been the subject of grievances and is well aware of the pain she inflicts, but she refuses to alter her behavior.

(b) (6) pays lip service to ICARE and ensures that her judges and attorneys keep up with ICARE training requirements. Because she feels that the rules do not apply to her, however, she fails miserably in her implementation of this mandatory standard. The desire to instill fear is inconsistent with Integrity, and terrorizing attorneys does not demonstrate Respect. She might argue that she has Commitment, but that VA Core Value necessitates subordinating one’s own interests to those of the agency and the Veterans it serves. (b) (6) sense of entitlement is incongruous with Commitment as defined for ICARE purposes. The Union observes that (b) (6) reprehensible management practices are inconsistent with VA Core Characteristics and certainly fail to promote the MyVA initiative. Cowed, harassed, and mistreated attorneys likely produce less, both in terms of quality and quantity, than attorneys who must deal only with the pressure inherent at a place such as the Board.

(b) (6) may not rise to the level of malevolence displayed by (b) (6). Her employees, however, point out that (b) (6) lacks the communication and interpersonal skills to manage others. She displays a lack of empathy and misperceives social situations in that she takes offense at innocent occurrences and expresses fear in harmless situations. For example, she called security during a meeting with the Union despite having known the Union representatives for years, two respected attorneys with no history workplace violence. (b) (6) laughs inappropriately at meetings, leaving those around her to wonder what she is contemplating. Other times, she fails to respond to pleasantries and greetings.

Managers must have keen interpersonal skills and a strong ability to read people, interpret social situations, and understand social cues. Someone as socially inept as (b) (6) (b) (6) is not up to the job. She is certainly suited to solitary tasks, but she does not possess the competencies required for a position entailing a great deal of human contact and strong interpersonal skills.

In addition to marked social deficits, and perhaps because of those deficits, (b) (6) (b) (6) shows little interest in employee rights or wellbeing. For instance, on at least one occasion she targeted an employee for increased scrutiny once the employee announced her pregnancy. She further notified this employee of her decision to terminate her flexiplace participation due to unacceptable performance 8 weeks into her 16 week maternity leave, as well as advised her she would return to work to face a PIP. She mailed these notices to the employee's home while she was on FMLA leave. The employee quit.

When placing attorneys on PIPs, (b) (6) (b) (6) routinely turns to attorneys, insisting that they alone state how they will improve their performance. Her refusal to offer constructive proposals for improvement is simply unproductive, in violation of law and the contract, and most importantly failed to give an employee a clear way back to fully successful performance. A PIP is supposed to be a cooperative process to assist an employee. It is not an indictment and certainly not an adversarial process. With (b) (6) (b) (6), however, PIPs are adversarial.

(b) (6) (b) (6) has refused to grant promotions to fully successful attorneys without a coherent explanation. The foregoing is in clear violation of the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement (MCBA) which mandates that specific reasons be provided for failing to grant career ladder promotions.

Perhaps not grasping that Bargaining Unit employees have specific rights, (b) (6) (b) (6) is disrespectful to the Union and to employee rights. On occasion, she refuses to allow Union representatives an opportunity to speak at meetings, frustrating the purpose of Union representation and instilling intimidation and fear in subordinates. She refuses to maintain a copy of the MCBA, and does not allow Union representatives to point out relevant provisions during meetings. She sparsely attended a two-day joint labor-management training on the MCBA in June 2014, arriving late and leaving early, although her direct supervisor and other (b) (6) (b) (6) attended the training in full. She was required to attend the training pursuant to a settlement agreement entered into in April 2013. She flouted that agreement to the detriment of employees who require managers who understand and respect the MCBA.

A pronounced and likely pathological deficiency in the social arena coupled with an utter disregard for employee rights and wellbeing is inconsistent with ICARE. Disregard for established employee rights, hostility to the Union, and hostile treatment of pregnant employees amounts to a lack of Integrity. She does not fulfill organizational responsibilities, which include supporting and cultivating employees. As such, she displays a lack of Commitment. She does not show Advocacy because her hostile

conduct toward employees does not advance the interests of Veterans. As obvious from the discussion herein to include her refusal to attend mandatory MCBA training, she has no Respect for those with whom she works. Finally, her habit of hindering employee success does not lead to Excellence. In that same manner, she flouts the VA Core Characteristic of Quality. Finally, she discourages employees and promotes failure rather than success in contravention of the MyVA initiative, which seeks to empower employees.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) has held a multitude of high level positions at VA. He seems to move from position to position and around the country with great frequency. His peripatetic career is curious, and one wonders whether problems engendered by his inept management style prompt him to seek clean slates elsewhere. Most recently, (b) (6) left San Francisco and arrived in Washington, DC in the summer of 2012. In November 2013 he began to serve as (b) (6). By March 2015, he became (b) (6). Previously, he spent most if not all of his career with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Even at VHA, he hopped from position to position and from one end of the country to the other leaving a host of problems behind him. If nothing else, (b) (6) itinerant nature in the later stages of his career suggests profound instability.

The Union also points to the fact that (b) (6), who has had countless opportunities to study the government relocation process, filed a complaint with the United States Civilian Board of Contract Appeals regarding reimbursement for his cross-country move in the summer of 2012. (b) (6) arguments, to include an assertion that he was facing “extreme financial pressure,” appear disingenuous, and were rejected by the United States Civilian Board of Contract Appeals. They show a lack of regard for the agency, that for reasons unknown, has given him so many opportunities.

Union discussions show that while serving as the (b) (6) and later (b) (6), (b) (6) revealed poor management skills. For example, he almost always sided with management officials, and when he decided grievances in favor of Bargaining Unit employees, he did little to nothing to ensure that supervisors enforced the favorable results. Although he paid lip service to anti-bullying policies by management, he was slow and indecisive when such conduct was brought to his attention. There was a generally hostile work environment at the San Francisco VAMC, which (b) (6) did not attempt to correct. During his tenure at the San Francisco VAMC, a record number of hostile work environment grievances were filed to no avail. He himself contributed to a hostile work environment by public reprimands.

There is also evidence that he engaged in cronyism by hiring personal friends for senior positions at the San Francisco VAMC. Indeed, when he arrived at the San Francisco VAMC, he brought with him a married couple from a VA facility in Florida where he had worked previously. He appointed the husband as (b) (6) and arranged a position for the wife, who was put in charge of (b) (6) at the VAMC. When (b) (6), their patron, left San Francisco for VACO, the couple returned to Florida.

As (b) (6), (b) (6) has continued employing bad management practices. Very soon after assuming that role, without taking adequate time to acquaint himself with the office, he began to make changes that had a negative impact upon longstanding employees. For example, employees arriving just a number of minutes late had to remain at the office for an extra 15 minutes at the end of the day. He reduced all telework schedules and removed some employees from telework altogether. He also did away with the compressed work schedules of many employees that had been in place for years. It also appears that he did not have a complete grasp of the type of work performed by the (b) (6), yet resisted input and guidance from longtime employees.

(b) (6) places hardships on subordinates who have little or no recourse. Following meetings, he sends emails memorializing the discussions that contain items that were never discussed. Often, he meets to discuss problems late Friday afternoons, causing stress and anxiety throughout the weekend. He denies reasonable accommodations despite clear evidence of medical necessity. Also, he refused to fill a position left vacant after a retirement, causing the remaining employees to be overwhelmed with work. He continued to assign work via email to former subordinates at (b) (6) even after he left for his current position with (b) (6).

As (b) (6) appears to have provided direct supervision to the EEO office, against EEOC's mandate in MD-110, Chapter 1. Most saliently, under MD-110, Chapter 1, the EEO Director cannot be placed under the supervision of the agency's Director of Personnel or other officials responsible for executing and advising on personnel actions. He appears to have acted in violation of that provision.

(b) (6) retaliates against employees who file complaints, and more than one employee complained that (b) (6) was particularly hostile to African Americans. He harasses and intimidates employees, some of whom are afraid to be alone with him. He assigns additional duties and/or takes disciplinary action as a form of retaliation, and he retaliates in a multitude of other ways such as negative performance evaluations. He is seen as mean spirited and causes such anxiety in his subordinates to the extent that their health is affected.

(b) (6), who was senior to (b) (6) when he served as the (b) (6) went along with his decisions that interfered with longstanding telework agreements and compressed work schedules. She herself is seen as antagonistic

to the notion of telework, which is contrary to VA's pro-telework policies that have been mandated by the Secretary. She is well aware of (b) (6) poor management style and his retaliatory actions against certain employees through formal and informal complaints. She has a habit of ignoring employee concerns and simply fails to respond. Instead of taking corrective action, she supported (b) (6) decisions, thereby causing employees great hardship. Her indifference toward hardworking employees and pro-management bias is detrimental to the morale of her staff, which is quite low.

(b) (6) complaint about improper reimbursement for moving costs suggests wanting Integrity. He offered no legal authority for his arguments and did not submit full substantiation for the sums he was seeking. The crux of his argument was that he was in financial dire straits, an assertion that is hard to believe in the case of a person who has been serving in high-paying positions for many years. He retaliates against employees who file complaints. All of the foregoing actions depict a man whose Integrity is questionable. The Union advances no specific comments regarding his Commitment and Advocacy, although these ICARE components would certainly be compromised in someone whose Integrity is lacking. Certainly, he fails with regard to Respect in that he harasses and mistreats employees. He does not strive for Excellence as is apparent from his practice of heaping unreasonable amounts of work on employees, as he did when he refused to hire a replacement for a position that was vacated.

(b) (6) support of (b) (6) during his unimpressive stint as the (b) (6) calls into question her commitment to ICARE. She demonstrated a clear disrespect for employees by failing to hear their concerns and neglecting to take remedial action when warranted. Her support of (b) (6) is also indicative of a preference for supporting management over any concern for Excellence.

(b) (6) and (b) (6) hold powerful positions at VA, yet they do little to promote VA Core Characteristics. They do not measure up to the Trustworthy standard. (b) (6) does not address legitimate employee concerns and fails to back them. (b) (6) fails with respect to Trustworthy by his deplorable treatment of employees and attempts to extract undue funds from the agency. The characteristics of Quality, Innovative, and Agile are not achieved when the workforce is a low priority and in situations where staff members are beleaguered.

Both (b) (6) and (b) (6) are not mindful of the MyVA initiative that calls for supporting employees in order to enable them to produce good work. Certainly harassing and otherwise mistreating subordinates is not the way to extract the most from their capabilities. In addition, creating this kind of negative environment in the (b) (6) in which employees are not heard, does not serve to encourage employees to present new ideas and use creativity and initiative to promote a more effective agency.

(b) (6)

The Union spoke with approximately 10 current and former (b) (6) employees. They are intelligent, articulate, highly capable, and a credit to the agency. They are united in their dissatisfaction with (b) (6) which caused some of them to leave. Indeed, in the past three years, (b) (6) has had an unusual turnover of 65%. Credible employees indicated that 90% of the departures constituted regrettable losses. Only a small portion of the attrition was due to retirement. Many left due to dissatisfaction with the hostile work environment at (b) (6)

This discussion focuses primarily on (b) (6) shortcomings, as she sets the tone for (b) (6). However, the Union will highlight significant deficiencies concerning other members of the senior management team (SMT).

(b) (6) arrived at (b) (6) a number of years ago with no prior management experience. She was new to VA at that time as well. Due to her lack of managerial experience and individual character traits, she has created a dysfunctional work environment as reflected in abysmal results in the All Employee Survey (AES) in 2013 and 2014. Several employees commented on the fact that (b) (6) and the SMT tend to micromanage and focus on minutiae and procedural matters rather than substance, and that such managerial practices might be appropriate for supervising very low-level clerical employees who perform routine functions rather than professional employees performing complex tasks requiring flexibility, creativity, and ingenuity.

(b) (6) exercises poor managerial judgement by taking action or attempting to take action without consulting subordinates who are actively working on a particular project. In one case, she tried to pressure employees to change dates of a conference so that it would not begin on a Monday in order that she would not have to grant the participating employees compensatory time for Sunday travel. However, all of the approvals from high up on the chain of command were already in place, the venue had been retained, and information on conference details was already advertised. Those in charge of organizing the conference had to explain to (b) (6) that all of the senior-level approvals would have to be sought again and that all of the other arrangements would have to be redone. They also told her that the event had to begin on a Monday morning given the length of training being provided and the set-up time required. Such interference on (b) (6) part demoralizes employees who expend efforts on projects only to be second guessed.

(b) (6) lack of leadership experience and inability to manage others is further exemplified by her poor communication style. For example, she will often turn to a lower-level employee to make adjustments to the work of a higher-level employee actually in charge of the task whose work she already approved. One wonders why she does not communicate her concerns directly to the person responsible for the project when it is presented to her.

(b) (6) gives little direction and is not open to suggestions from others. For example, some of her staff members are Veterans who have commanded troops in Iraq. They are highly competent employees. (b) (6) and the SMT who follows her lead give these individuals little direction and no autonomy – a clear recipe for disaster. One frustrated employee who served as an officer in Iraq and displays many important leadership qualities indicated that at (b) (6) the only authority that he could exercise was over his pencil cup. His ideas are rebuffed, and (b) (6), together with the SMT, does not value his experience or seek to benefit from it. The (b) (6) employees culled from the officer ranks are particularly frustrated, as they are accustomed to assuming responsibility for accomplishing tasks. Here, their efforts are stymied. (b) (6) and the SMT do not make any efforts to better the staff.

(b) (6) and other members of the SMT fail to take decisive action. As such, they simply fail to respond to requests in a timely manner, thereby inconveniencing and distressing employees. When one asked to telework after a medical appointment, her reply was unresponsive, and the employee was left with no clear idea of what to do. When the lights in the building went out on April 7, 2015, building management officials told the SMT that they should send all employees home and allow for *ad hoc* telework. (b) (6) responded that she did not have the authority to send people home, and (b) (6) indicated that this was not the private sector and that she could not let employees go. The employees wondered how it was that members of the SMT felt that they did not have the authority to make decisions about *ad hoc* telework.

(b) (6) displays indecision in that she does not provide opinions. She gives no particular direction and agrees with almost everything employees propose without changes, edits, or suggestions. Her indecision causes unnecessary hostility among staff members who struggle to divine her wishes.

The (b) (6) has been hopelessly indecisive in more serious situations. In June 2014, (b) (6) staff became aware of a proposed act that would consolidate Non-VA Medical Care (fee) payment activity into the Chief Business Office (CBO) through the transfer of authority from the VISNs to CBO. (b) (6) staff proposed proactive action to the entire SMT, as this transfer of authority effectively eliminated the VISN and (b) (6) authority to perform oversight for the Non-VA Care program due to the shift in management of the program from the facility to CBO. Without a new oversight structure in place, the Non-VA Medical Care program, under CBO, would effectively operate with no compliance oversight. In the summer of 2014, (b) (6) staff made suggestions but were not permitted to put them in writing. In the fall of 2014, staff members independently developed several compliance oversight models and submitted them to the SMT for consideration and decision. Nonetheless, to this day, the Non-VA Medical Care program continues without compliance oversight for payment operations.

(b) (6) inexperience and unfitness for a management position is manifested by the hostile work environment she creates. In this regard, she mistreats employees facing grave personal crises, she humiliates employees in public, and she states explicitly that those who are not happy should seek employment elsewhere. She even instills fear in

peers, namely other members of the SMT, who are afraid to confront her because she does not tolerate any sort of negative feedback. The hostile work environment is exemplified by taking few if any remedial steps following shocking AES survey results and by blocking efforts of an employee group that formed a committee to come up with solutions to the endemic problems faced by (b) (6) staff. Of note, she and the SMT instructed the employees who took charge of this project not to share their findings with colleagues.

The Union observes that the AES revealed a multitude of problems at (b) (6) indicative of a hostile work environment, to include a lack of psychological safety, a lack of fairness, a lack of respect, a lack of cooperation, a lack of accountability, favoritism, poor and ineffective communication, questionable ethics, and a fear of speaking up. The Union notes that (b) (6) also commented that dissatisfied employees should find alternative employment. One of the employees suggested that (b) (6) operates out of fear instilled by (b) (6). (b) (6) has stated that she fears losing her job if she defies (b) (6). (b) (6) has been described as a puppet as opposed to a leader.

(b) (6) contributes to a hostile work environment by forcing employees to sign performance evaluations before any discussion can ensue, and even before they have been afforded the opportunity to see them. This practice prevents employees from providing input or requesting necessary clarification and signifies (b) (6) heavy-handed managerial practices that are directed from the top down without room for input from subordinates. She accused employees who provided input at a meeting of trying to “derail” it. She pits employees against each other by providing conflicting instructions. She forbids employees from discussing certain topics, although she does not similarly restrain herself. Many employees who leave the (b) (6) office where (b) (6) works point to her as the reason for their departure. She has been described as a schoolyard bully who uses fear to manage subordinates. There are several EEO complaints pending against (b) (6).

At (b) (6), employees’ psychological safety is compromised by instructions forbidding them to discuss certain topics. For example, an Office of Inspector General (OIG) report was released in April 2015, which was available publicly. Nonetheless, the day after the OIG report came out, which mentioned officials connected with (b) (6) called a meeting at which she refused to take questions. She merely informed employees that they were forbidden from discussing the report among themselves. At one time, (b) (6) (b) (6) advised an employee whom she placed on a PIP that she could not discuss the PIP with anybody and would be disciplined if she did. The purpose of the PIP is frustrated when the employee who is expected to show improvement cannot rely upon colleagues for guidance. As stated, the employee committee that formed following the AES was under similar orders not to share results with colleagues. Such instructions create fear and cause intimidation because employees do not know whom to trust and cannot gain information, help, or support from colleagues. These forbidden topics are emblematic of the lack of transparency at (b) (6).

(b) (6) contributes to a hostile work environment. The Union interviewed a former employee who arrived at the (b) (6) office in February 2011. On her first day, her new colleagues stated, "You don't want to work here." She thought they were joking but soon learned that they were not. This employee pointed to (b) (6) as the source of much misery. She practiced favoritism, did not like employees who could not discuss certain reality TV shows, and the like. Employees in (b) (6) hoped that change would come when (b) (6) was hired, but it did not.

(b) (6) leadership is not concerned with employee safety. During Hurricane Sandy, the (b) (6) facility was open. On the first day of the storm, a Monday, the office closed early only because fire department officials ordered the building evacuated. The office was closed on the following day due to a power outage. During the following days and weeks, however, (b) (6) made no allowances for employees affected by the storm. Indeed, she, (b) (6) and (b) (6) required an employee who lived in Manhattan to take leave even though New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg shut down public transit in Manhattan in the days after the storm, leaving her no way of commuting to (b) (6). Their rationale was that VACO in Washington was not closed and therefore the (b) (6) office, as part of VACO, would be open.

One employee who had to evacuate her home with nothing but the clothes on her back and move in with relatives in a neighboring state asked (b) (6) whether she could telework, as her temporary housing was very far from the office. (b) (6) responded by saying that a telework policy was not in place and that she should have planned better by making arrangements to sleep on the couch of a colleague who lived near the office. It goes without saying that there is no guarantee that a colleague would have taken her in, especially in a situation such as Hurricane Sandy where the damage would take weeks or months to repair. As well, this employee had a family she did not wish to abandon. In a November 2012 statement, Chief of Staff Jose Riojas indicated that employee wellbeing was a top priority. (b) (6) should have exercised common sense even before such statement was issued. (b) (7)(B) too required a remote employee to commute to work in dangerous weather conditions rather than permit *ad hoc* telework.

(b) (6), and (b) (6) in particular, are hostile to telework, a practice the agency is actively trying to promote. She was reluctant, for example, to allow an employee to perform *ad hoc* telework unless she could prove that she had enough work to keep her busy. This is an odd request because the assumption is that she would do the work that she was assigned and that sufficient work would be assigned. Indeed, it is a management responsibility to assign sufficient tasks to keep employees busy. She denies *ad hoc* telework during inclement weather. She is still denying telework to her employees in (b) (6) despite the fact that (b) (6) employees won a grievance that led to telework for District of Columbia-based employees. (b) (6) allows telework pursuant to the grievance. However, she is inconsistent in permitting work from remote locations pursuant to family emergencies. Some requests are granted and some are not for no apparent reason other than favoritism. She prevents useful work by requiring out-of-favor employees to take leave rather than work remotely.

Of the (b) (6) and (b) (6) were said to lack basic human decency. They were the ones held by staff to be responsible for the toxic culture that has been described by a former staff member that worked for various components of VA to be to worst most toxic environment he ever experienced. Many of the employees at (b) (6) have little recourse because the SMT has classified them as non-Bargaining Unit despite the fact that they have no managerial responsibilities.

Employees hoped that the AES results would spur (b) (6), or (b) (6) to action. Thus far, they have been disappointed.

That ICARE is not being heeded by the SMT at (b) (6) is an understatement. Integrity is necessarily absent in a hostile work environment where even protected speech is curtailed. Commitment and Advocacy are absent as demonstrated by inaction in even serious situations. The SMT show little Respect, which is especially egregious because combat Veterans work at (b) (6). Finally, Excellence is not possible in an environment with appalling AES results where employee input is ignored. As stated above, the (b) (6) staff with whom the Union spoke is accomplished and impressive. The staff is passionate about (b) (6) mission and would like to expend their efforts productively.

The (b) (6) SMT ignores the mandated VA Core Characteristics. The SMT is not Trustworthy for a variety of reasons but most notably for their attempts to obfuscate the truth by forbidding conversation. The SMT hinders Quality by neglecting to seek advice from experienced and skilled employees. While (b) (6) employees are an able group, they are hindered in their work by poor management that prevents creative contributions from employees.

The MyVA initiative is not served by the (b) (6) SMT, as it fails to tap the extensive potential at its fingertips through its incompetence, hostility, and limiting atmosphere. (b) (6) employees, some of whom are military officers, have so much to contribute but are given no latitude and are stifled in their ability to act in the manner that is most Veteran centric under the circumstances.

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6) management practices are abhorrent. She presides over approximately nine low-level clerical employees for whom she creates a hostile work environment. Some employees are subjected to especially harsh and unreasonable treatment. Her practices and policies, however, have an impact on all of her low-level clerical employees. Some of the employees whom she harasses are Veterans who deserve

gratitude and respect, especially from VA. Apparently, Veteran status is immaterial to (b) (6).

(b) (6) imposes harsh disciplinary measures in situations that do not merit disciplinary action. For example, she harassed and used petty incidents to propose harsh discipline based in a large part on the employee's service-connected disabilities. When she does not impose improper disciplinary measures, she threatens to take action against employees for perceived offenses. Indeed, she is militant about time, frequently forcing employees to take leave because their "whereabouts were unknown" whether the employee was on their 15 minute break, in the bathroom, or finishing a work related task that required them to be away from their desk. She gives employees a hard time about their "time and attendance" even in instances in which there are unforeseeable public transport delays, stating that the employee should plan for an unforeseen delay because he commutes on the red line which is often delayed. Ultimately, she allowed the employee an authorized absence. She also makes veiled threats of termination. Clearly, this pattern of behavior is expressly designed to intimidate low-level employees who already face many hardships in life.

(b) (6) and her assistant, (b) (6), deliberately perpetuate chronic stress. Both berate employees in raised voices in full view of their colleagues. They speak in a derogatory and insulting manner using abusive language. (b) (6) regularly utters vulgarities when addressing employees. When such profanity was brought to (b) (6) attention, she did nothing, and the swearing continues unabated. She looks through employees' desks under the guise of searching for work-related material, thereby diminishing any sense of privacy that an employee might have possessed. She reveals personal employee information to other employees in the office. She instructs (b) (6) to survey the office at regular intervals to monitor employees and report on their whereabouts. The mere fact of the hourly surveillance instills fear because employees do not know what will prompt (b) (6) to report them. On one occasion, he advised (b) (6) that an employee had been on the phone. That employee was forced to take leave because of the "personal nature" of the phone call, regardless of the fact it was in relation to taking care of an urgent situation of a family member. The daily humiliation, harassment, and intimidation lead to stress. The unrelenting stress causes employees to take leave or seek treatment in the health unit. These absences lead to more harassment and intimidation, and the stress is not only perpetuated but intensified. She believes that yelling on her part, and rude and antagonistic conduct on the part of (b) (6), will motivate employees to get their work done.

(b) (6) is preoccupied with the notion of "respect" and her temperamental nature wreaks havoc on employees. She has good days and bad ones. Her moods and behavior are unpredictable, and employees' work experience fluctuates based on (b) (6) particular mood. The Union emphasizes that (b) (6) managerial ineptitude is deeply rooted and impervious to change. She has been enrolled in many management training programs intended to ameliorate her supervisory inadequacies. After these trainings, her performance improves for a week or two until she reverts to ingrained habits and traits. Survey results by her employees yielded universally bad results. Not

one of her employees provided complimentary feedback. Despite poor reviews, she does not alter her practices. Hence, she is either refusing to improve or incapable of change. Either way, she lacks managerial skills and should not be holding a supervisory position.

As stated, (b) (6) does not internalize material presented during management training sessions. Similarly, she has not incorporated ICARE standards delivered through training and constant reminders to all VA employees. She fails with respect to Integrity because she does not adhere to the highest professional standards. Instead she harasses the very employees she is expected to lead and mentor. Her Commitment to VA's mission and Advocacy are questionable because she mistreats powerless VA employees, some of whom are Veterans. Certainly, her supervisory methods, which involve threats, misinformation, and persistent harassment reflect a clear lack of Respect. Finally, her staff group, composed of browbeaten, powerless, low-level employees cannot achieve Excellence.

The intent of MyVA is to provide Veterans the benefits and services they deserve with ease and efficiency. In order to accomplish this mission, it is critical to have a culture where employees feel valued and empowered to succeed in their important work. Rather, they are constantly watched, intimidated, harassed, and oppressed.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) supervises the (b) (6) office in (b) (6). The environment at the (b) (6) is chaotic, with a complete lack of direction. Little is put into writing, and staff members are forced to rely on each other in order to identify appropriate procedures. One employee advised the Union that learning and training were haphazard and that guidance was inconsistent. There is no coherent process for disseminating information and instruction. Employees have the distinct impression that (b) (6) and other managers at the (b) (6) do not possess sufficient subject-matter expertise.

Aside from running a disorganized and disjointed operation, (b) (6) is guilty of favoritism and vindictiveness. For example, as to the former, she indicated to one employee that he could not attend a training program because she could not find the appropriate paperwork and would not provide him with instructions so that the employee could complete the paperwork himself. As a result, the employee was not able to take advantage of the training program. Shortly thereafter, she arranged for another, more favored employee to pursue training but failed to offer the opportunity to anybody else in the office.

With regard to vindictiveness, (b) (6) assured employees that they could work remotely a certain number of days per week. At least two employees made costly moves across state lines in reliance on the representations of (b) (6) and her team. Once the employees completed arrangements such as school enrollment for children, moving belongings, and coordinated schedules with spouses, she advised the employees that there was a geographical restriction and that their new residences were too far from Nashville

for them to telework. She notified employees that they would have to be present in the office more days a week than had been contemplated originally. Thus, after undertaking expensive moves, they were compelled to move back to Nashville. One former employee, whose family had moved to Georgia, had to rent a room in Nashville because the more frequent commute was difficult due to the distance. She ended up taking a lower paying position closer to her new home in Georgia. In the case of that employee, it is clear that retaliation was a likely motive behind the last minute change to the telework agreement, as this employee engaged in Union organizing, filed grievances, and brought the MCBA contract provisions to (b) (6) attention when appropriate procedures were not being followed. Previously, (b) (6) operated without regard to rights of bargaining unit members.

(b) (6) poor judgment creates an uncomfortable environment for her subordinates. On at least one occasion, she discussed a gun sale at work and expressed interest in purchasing a colleague's weapon. She displayed similar interest in another employee's Taser. She openly discusses her romantic partners and their physical attributes in an explicit and inappropriate manner. She also discusses sexual matters at the lunch table. At times, (b) (6) appears to be nursing a hangover. Employees have told the Union that (b) (6) conduct is unsettling because it is so clearly unprofessional.

(b) (6) causes apprehension among older employees because she discusses relative age and makes sure she always knows the identity of the youngest employee at the office. Older employees are taken to task when she is dissatisfied whereas young employees do not suffer similar consequences.

ICARE principles are foreign to (b) (6). Her favoritism, vindictiveness, and discriminatory behavior toward older employees show a lack of Integrity. Failing to make herself a subject-matter expert is tantamount to a lack of Commitment to the Veterans we serve who require VA staff to be knowledgeable in their fields. The foregoing is also an indication of the absence of Advocacy and Excellence. She cannot possibly be an advocate for Veteran interests and provide outstanding service without sufficient knowledge. As well, the disorderly means by which information is disseminated in the (b) (6) and chaotic atmosphere do not contribute to the Advocacy and Excellence elements of ICARE. (b) (6) unprofessional conduct shows that she does not Respect her employees or her position.

(b) (6), furthermore, is unfamiliar with the VA Core Values. A haphazard operation such as hers cannot promote Quality service. The fear of retaliation and unprofessional atmosphere prevent employees from being Innovative and Agile. (b) (6) does not provide equal opportunities to all employees and tends to favor youth. As such, she undermines the MyVA initiative that is designed to empower all VA employees to contribute to the best of their abilities. By favoring some and discounting others, she discourages many employees who would like to make improvements but know that they will not be heard.