

December 14, 2016

Mr. Donald Trump  
President-elect  
Presidential Transition Team  
Washington, DC

Dear President-elect Trump:

As you correctly noted on the campaign trail, we owe our veterans better service than we as a nation are currently providing, and improving the current system at the Department of Veterans Affairs is a moral imperative. We look forward to working with whomever you select to lead your Administration's efforts to build upon the reforms that have occurred since the Phoenix VA scandal. And while we all want these improvements to come at a faster pace, as a group of stakeholders working closely with or using VA services over the next 50-60 years, we support those who have proven their commitment and qualifications to getting it right.

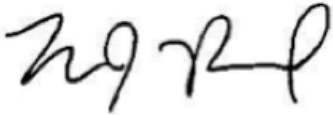
While you continue your deliberations over who you will select to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs, we ask you to strongly consider the proven track record of the current VA Secretary, Bob McDonald, who is leading the largest transformation in the department's history.

Over the past two years, Sec. McDonald has led an enterprise-wide transformation of the second largest department in the federal government. These efforts to transform and modernize the VA are showing early signs of success in the form of a better veteran experience and, if continued, we believe they have the potential to eventually make VA a model agency. It is therefore of the utmost importance that you select someone willing and able to continue prioritization of this work. We believe that person is Sec. McDonald.

The changes underway at VA – currently branded as the “MyVA” initiative – are far from complete, but they are starting to bear fruit. In a June 2016 VA survey, nearly 60% of veterans “trust[ed] VA to fulfill our country's commitment to Veterans,” up from 47% in December 2015. In a 2016 survey of post-9/11 injured veterans, 69% said VA medical centers were the top resource used since deployment to address mental health concerns, up from 65% in 2015.

Over the past year, VA has conducted in-depth research to identify pain points and understand veteran needs and expectations. To better align with those needs, it is consolidating its more than 500 existing veteran-facing websites into a single platform where veterans can check claim status, manage health care, and access education benefits and career training. It is modernizing its more than 200 call centers and launching a single telephone number through which veterans can reach any office at VA. And it is rewriting form letters to make them more accessible and easier to understand. These changes, among others, are happening because Sec. McDonald and the entire VA leadership team has committed to systematically tackling its problems in the way any well-functioning organization would – through holistic, evidence-based, 21st century solutions. The goal is to create a seamless, positive, veteran-centric experience.

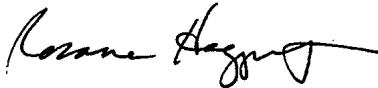
Transforming an agency as large and diverse as VA will take a continuous commitment from leadership over the course of many years. As you make your selection for VA Secretary, then, we advocate for an approach that recognizes and builds upon current progress. Given the challenges we face, we cannot afford to start over.



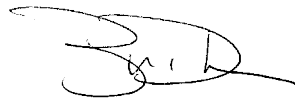
WILLIAM J. RAUSCH  
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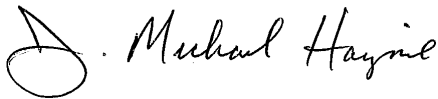
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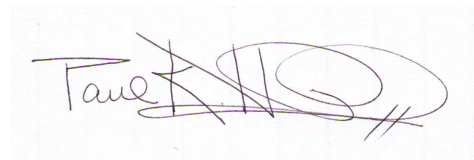
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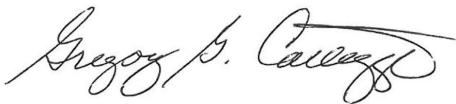
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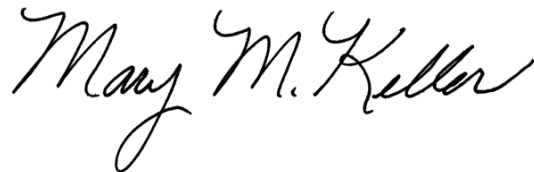
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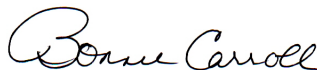
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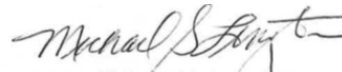
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