

WALTER B. JONES  
3D DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

ROOM 2333  
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-3415

COMMITTEES:  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
1105-C CORPORATE DRIVE  
GREENVILLE, NC 27858  
(252) 931-1003  
(800) 351-1697

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3303

April 23, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
Secretary  
U. S. Department of Veterans' Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I know you are aware of the lengthy delays in processing claims and appeals throughout the VA system, and at the Winston-Salem office in particular. While I understand the large number of service personnel returning from war and/or leaving our armed forces is straining the VA, that is no excuse. No veteran or surviving spouse should have to wait two years to obtain a decision. That is absolutely unacceptable. I strongly urge you to use all means necessary to rectify this problem immediately.

I have been a strong supporter of providing more financial resources to the department to improve processing times. I have also supported the agency's effort to digitize most VA records. However, I am not convinced that either of these things will be sufficient to solve the problem. The VA's budget has increased over 53% in the past five years, but processing times are worse. And digital records are only marginally beneficial as long as the VA continues to utilize several computer programs which cannot fully communicate with each other.

Therefore, I am calling on this administration to immediately initiate an independent review to determine the best options to address the backlog at Winston-Salem. This review must be conducted by individuals independent from current leadership within the Winston-Salem Regional Office. I would suggest that those responsible for actually processing the claims be allowed to provide suggestions on how to improve the system and be involved in creating a system that works efficiently and provides the best results. The review should take no longer than 30 days. Recommendations should be implemented immediately.

Mr. Secretary, our veterans deserve better. After all they've sacrificed for us, they deserve a VA that works for them. I would appreciate your response to this most important matter within two weeks. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress

Thank you!