

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

We write to express our outrage regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) decision to unilaterally terminate collective bargaining agreements covering over 377,000 employees.¹ These workers, many of whom are veterans themselves, have dedicated their lives to serving our nation's heroes. To that end, we demand that the VA reinstate collective bargaining agreements for affected federal unions.

On August 6, the Trump administration wrongly decided to terminate the collective bargaining agreements for the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO, National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), National Nurses Organizing Committee/ National Nurses United (NNU), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The unions have previously issued statements and protested the Administration's decision against proposed staff cuts and have filed numerous lawsuits against such cuts.²

For months, we have sought clarity from the VA regarding how they plan to implement the Executive Order related to the termination of collective bargaining agreements, but they have denied us any answers. The first official response we received was the VA's press release³, which attempted to justify the current contracts as "outdated" or "not aligned with VA values." To that end, it is clear that the Administration only terminated collective bargaining agreements for unions that have been critical of their actions, punishing those who have spoken out against VA policies that stripped protections for union members and the veterans they serve. Further, your assertion that "...unions that represent VA employees fight against the best interest of Veterans while protecting and rewarding bad workers" is both insulting and downright false. More than 80% of the VA's 450,000-person workforce is union-affiliated, and AFGE alone

¹ Teamsters for a Democratic Union, *the VA Terminates Collective Bargaining Rights for 377,000 Workers*. <https://www.tdu.org/va-terminates-bargaining-federal-workers>

² American Federation of Government Employees, *Unions Sue Trump Administration Over Move to Bust Federal Employee Unions*. <https://www.afge.org/publication/unions-sue-trump-administration-over-move-to-bust-federal-employee-unions/>

³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *VA terminates union contracts for most bargaining-unit employees*. <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-terminates-union-contracts-for-most-bargaining-unit-employees/>

represents about 300,000 employees working for the VA⁴. The assertion is nothing but a hollow pretense for silencing labor voices, voices that often speak out against administrative abuse against our veterans without fear of retaliation. Union contracts are renegotiated, not revoked.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly found that “a fundamental principle of the First Amendment is that the government may not punish or suppress speech based on disapproval of the ideas or perspectives the speech conveys.”⁵ Refusing to honor collective bargaining agreements is a direct affront to the rights of the VA employees who are union members. Chilling the speech of unions and their members instills fear in the workforce, rendering employees less likely to report abuse and practice accountability.

Silencing VA’s unionized workers is a direct contradiction to the agency’s purported goal of improving efficiency and transparency. Anyone who purports to care about efficiency and accountability in government would, in good faith, empower workers to speak truth to power, to voice unpopular opinions, and alert the VA to potential abuse happening to our veterans. The mass termination of bargaining rights undermines trust, jeopardizes workplace stability, and discourages those who want to choose a career with the VA. Moreover, it signals an intent to weaken oversight and accountability, all of which will certainly impact the quality of care for our veterans.

We will not stand by while the administration makes decisions that intentionally violate the rights of its workers and jeopardize the health and well-being of our nation’s heroes. The administration’s decision to terminate the collective bargaining agreements of over 377,000 union members will destabilize the already overburdened workforce delivering critical care and greatly impact services to our nation’s veterans. We demand that the VA cease any further attempts to bypass or undermine the collective power of employees who have honorably chosen to serve our nation’s veterans.

Sincerely,



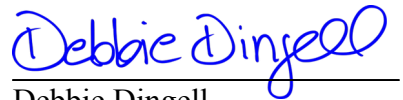
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

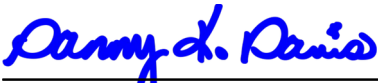


Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

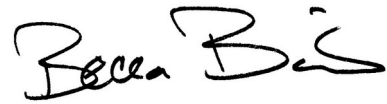
⁴ Military Times, *VA severs ties with most federal unions, terminating worker contracts*.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2025/08/06/va-severs-ties-with-most-federal-unions-terminating-worker-contracts/>

⁵ Supreme Court, *No. 15–1293*. https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-1293_1o13.pdf



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



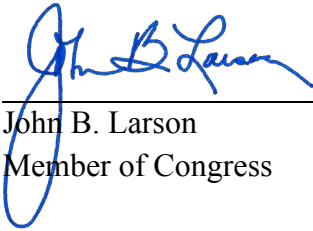
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Shri Thanedar
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John B. Larson
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Lucy McBath
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Kevin Mullin
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Rashida Tlaib
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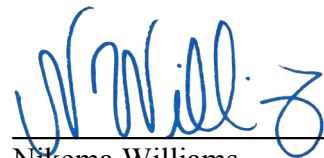
Juan Vargas
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Kristen McDonald Rivet
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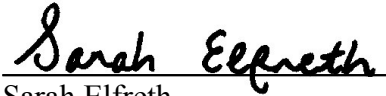
Nikema Williams
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Gwen S. Moore
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Bill Foster
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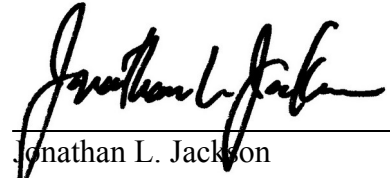
Sarah Elfreth
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Ro Khanna
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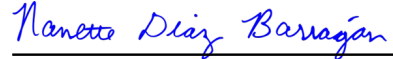
Stephen F. Lynch
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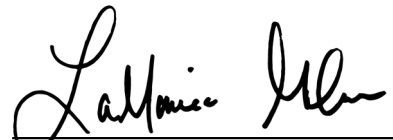
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
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Yassamin Ansari
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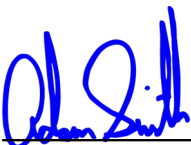
LaMonica McIver
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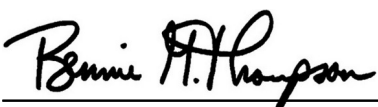
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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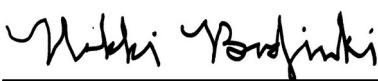
Betty McCollum
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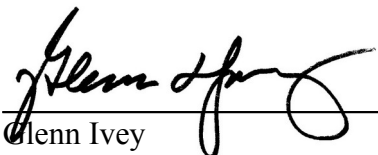
Jason Crow
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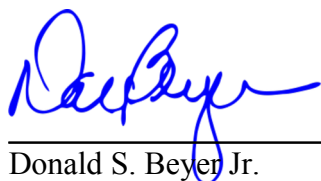
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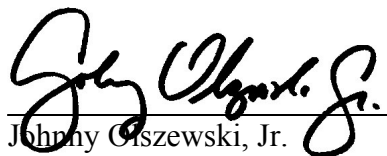
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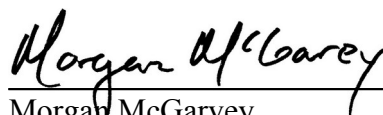
Marilyn Strickland
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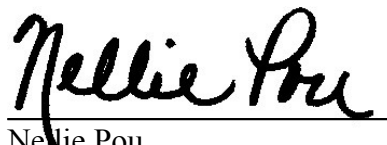
Mary Gay Scanlon
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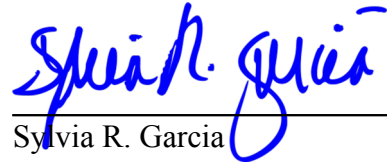
Dina Titus
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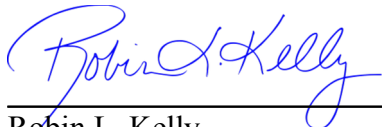
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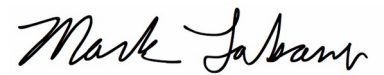
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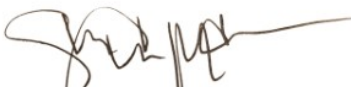
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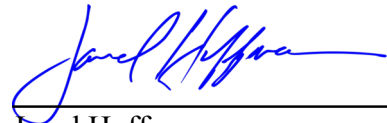
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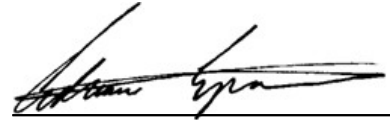
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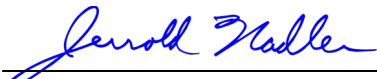
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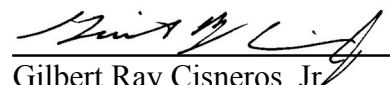
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Madeleine Dean
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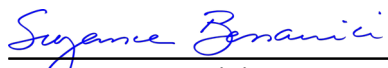
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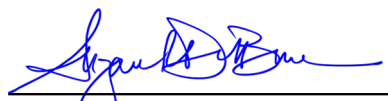
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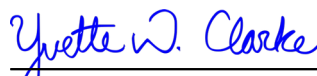
Suzanne Bonamici
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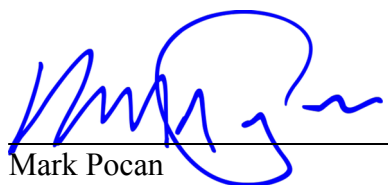
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Suzan K. DelBene
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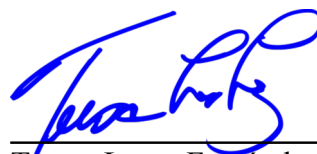
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Jim Tokuda
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Josh Harder
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