

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2016

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, North West
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald;


We write to raise our serious concerns for the welfare of the veterans in Montana. Today it was announced that the Director of the Montana Department of Veterans Affairs is stepping down, creating a vacancy that joins our vacant Associate Director and Chief of Staff positions. This is simply unacceptable and we request you make filling these positions a top priority for the sake of the veterans in Montana.

The failure of the VA to prioritize the hiring of these leadership positions with honorable individuals reflects a systemic failure of the VA to prioritize the welfare of veterans as a whole. Unfortunately, one does not have to look far today to see another upsetting story about the VA and its care for veterans. We refuse to let Montana, which has one of the country's largest veterans populations per capita, become the next story. The last time the Montana VA Director stepped down it took 9 months to replace the position, it is paramount that this lackadaisical stance toward filling such vital positions in Montana not happen again.

We urgently request that you make replacing the positions at the Montana VA a top priority, and work to replace the positions with the most qualified individuals possible. Additionally, we request that you schedule a meeting with the full Montana Congressional delegation immediately so we can ensure leadership positions are replaced, and top care is provided to the veterans in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter, please contact us at 202-228-1188 or Schedule@Daines.Senate.Gov so that we can arrange this meeting.

Sincerely,


STEVE DAINES
United States Senator


RYAN ZINKE
Member of Congress