



# SUPPORT S. 462/ H.R. 1133 VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT TO RESTORE WORKPLACE RIGHTS TO VA HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

February 28, 2019

The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has waged a war on health care professionals caring for veterans in VA medical facilities that threatens the ability of veterans to access quality, safe care in a timely manner. The American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO and its National VA Council (AFGE), urges you to become a cosponsor of the **VA Employee Fairness Act**. This bill will restore equal rights to these dedicated front-line clinicians, including physicians, registered nurses, dentists, physician assistants, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors and expanded-function dental auxiliaries.

These counterproductive, arbitrary policies have been used to silence and harass Title 38 VA clinicians since 2003 by denying them the right to grieve, arbitrate and negotiate over routine matters including overtime pay, scheduling and reassignments. Other VA health care personnel and the rest of the VA workforce have full collective bargaining rights, as do medical professionals treating DoD military personnel.

Over the past year, the VA Secretary has used its Title 38 collective bargaining policies to carry out extreme, unprecedented attacks on VA clinicians including taking away the right to union representation in agency appeals processes and elimination of all official time for union officials in Title 38 positions. Title 38 employees have historically used official time to provide input on proposed VA policy changes during labor-management committees, such as the Disruptive Behavior Committee and Employee Engagement Committee. These committees address both patient-centered safety practices, as well as employees. The loss of Title 38 official time also limits the ability of VA clinicians to choose their own labor representatives to save their jobs and advocate for them when management implements new practices and IT systems in an increasingly complex health care environment. Further, VA clinicians work in understaffed, high stress workplaces and are subject to frequent management treatment that is demoralizing and sometimes career-destroying.

Taking away their union representation when they are facing unjustified removals and disciplinary actions is outrageous and hurts the VA's ability to compete for these scarce medical professionals in the health care marketplace.

**IT IS TIME TO GIVE ALL VA EMPLOYEES THE SAME BARGAINING RIGHTS AND AN EQUAL VOICE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE COSPONSOR THE VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT.**

For more information, please contact \_\_\_\_\_  
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**VETERANS ARE NOT FOR PROFIT**