

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, DC 20571

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

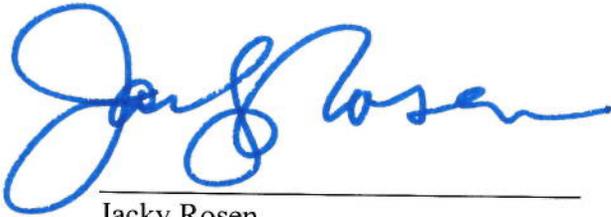
We write regarding a report of serious allegations of inadequate patient care and potential misconduct at the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) in North Las Vegas, Nevada, recently broadcast by a Las Vegas network affiliate TV station. The report, based on interviews with two former VA doctors and a veteran patient, details alleged mismanagement, long wait times for veterans awaiting lifesaving care, staff vacancies, low morale, high employee turnover, pressure from management to manipulate metrics related to veteran access to care, and retaliation against whistleblowers who come forward when they feel our veterans are not getting the care they deserve. If true, these allegations are extremely concerning and the report merits further investigation.

The vast majority of VA employees are service-driven individuals focused on providing the best possible care to our Nation's heroes, and they operate under demanding circumstances, with a renewed focus on limiting wait times for veterans following the 2014 VA scandal and subsequent reforms. It is paramount that we take care of those who have bravely worn the uniform of the United States, regardless of the challenges. That is why we are particularly disturbed by allegations that the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System has a "toxic" work environment where whistleblowers face retaliation, VA upper management receives preferential treatment and gets care before veterans, and the focus is more on meeting metrics – or appearing to do so – than caring for veterans.

With this in mind, we request that you investigate the charges of mismanagement which are alleged to have occurred at VASNHS. We understand that further implementation of the VA MISSION Act in or around June 2019 may alleviate some of the issues in recent news reports. We therefore ask that you monitor the rollout and subsequent impact of these changes to ensure that they accomplish the goal of all veterans receiving timely, high-quality care. We ask that you ensure that, under the new law, the VA plays a more active role in appointment management when veterans elect outside providers so that there is adequate follow up when veterans are inconvenienced by issues like cancellations or delays to their treatment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving care for our nation's veterans and to your prompt response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez-Maslo
United States Senator



Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress