

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

We are writing to express our deep reservations about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These initiatives result in worse care for veterans, make employees feel ostracized, and lead to potential violations of the Hatch Act.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has started to enforce VHA Directive 1341(3) in a way that puts women veterans in danger.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the VHA is allowing biological men into women-only single-sex spaces, including bathrooms, exam rooms, and medical exam areas irrespective of where the veteran is in their “transition”. We are concerned that this would put women veterans in danger and could be particularly traumatizing to sexual assault survivors who now might be in a sensitive space next to a biological male. Moreover, if a veteran were to voice her objection to this arrangement, she would be the one required to relocate.<sup>2</sup> The VA must ensure that women veterans are not being put at risk to appease radical transgender activists.

It has also come to our attention that there was a DEI training opportunity for psychology supervisors at the VA in Colorado that consisted of a 1-hour “Racial Caucuses” session. The email promoting the training opportunity states, “Racial caucuses are designed to discuss oppression, privilege, and engage in anti-racism activism and these conversations are done in separate racial groups (POC, Multicultural, and White caucuses).” Separating employees by racial group and turning one group into oppressors and the other into the oppressed is politicizing the VA and does nothing to help veterans. How is it acceptable under any circumstance to separate employees by race? The email also says, “White individuals need to educate themselves on their role in racism whereas people of color need dedicate space to connect and process negative racialized experiences).” The email smears all white people by insinuating they are racist. It also assumes all non-white people are victims of racism. Someone is racist or a victim of racism because of actions, not the color of their skin.

The VA has also created a virtual Race-Based Stress, Trauma, and Empowerment (RBSTE) group to care for veterans who have been exposed to racism. Racism is evil, has no place in our

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.patientcare.va.gov/LGBT/docs/directives/VHA\\_DIRECTIVE\\_1341.pdf](https://www.patientcare.va.gov/LGBT/docs/directives/VHA_DIRECTIVE_1341.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/4416673-va-is-abandoning-women-veterans-rights-in-favor-of-gender-identity/>

society, and must be rooted out. It makes no sense, however, that the VA would exclude white veterans from participation in this group. Trying to combat racism by perpetuating racism is counterproductive. As Clinical Psychologist Eddie Waldrep wrote about the RBSTE group, “By specifically excluding white Veterans, the VA is excluding the largest group of Veterans who may be victims of race-based trauma and likely to benefit from such an intervention. At the same time, it is implicitly villainizing an entire group of Veterans based on the color of their skin which one can predict will create a sense of discontent in any group.”<sup>3</sup>

The VA must focus on delivering world-class healthcare and benefits to our nation’s heroes. The VA’s DEI efforts distract from your important mission and must end immediately. We appreciate your attention to this matter and eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eli Crane" in a cursive style.

Eli Crane  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wrongspeakpublishing.com/p/why-is-the-va-segregating-veterans>