

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

March 15, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to reject the VA Accountability First Act (H.R. 1259), introduced by Chairman David Roe. H.R. 1259 is a thinly veiled effort to destroy union rights and shift the blame for management failures at the VA onto the backs of front line employees.

The bill severely truncates the appeals process in current law and destroys grievance procedures that have been successfully used throughout the federal government to provide stability and protection against arbitrary treatment, and with it any guarantee that employees will feel safe speaking out against mismanagement or to protect patient safety.

Rather than building a culture of trust at the VA, H.R. 1259 would turn back the clock to an era when employees could be fired with the slightest justification and almost no opportunity to mount an effective defense. Worse, the bill would single out VA employees for harsher treatment than other federal workers, including the recoupment of compensation already earned without adequate due process, including pension benefits, and relocation and performance bonuses.

The Roe bill reflects the Chairman's opposition to collective bargaining and the crucial role labor organizations play in giving federal workers a voice on the job. For the 120,000 veterans who work at the VA, this bill is not only a slap in the face but a betrayal of the promise that they would be guaranteed fair treatment if they came to work for the federal government.

We urge you to reject H.R. 1259.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department

WS/BC/lkr

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

815 16th St., N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006 • 202-637-5000 • www.aflcio.org

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TEFERE GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT