



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Washington DC 20420

March 26, 2020

In Reply Refer To: 001B  
FOIA Request: 20-03373-F

American Oversight  
Attention: Austin Evers  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Suite B255  
Washington, DC 20005  
[foia@americanoversight.org](mailto:foia@americanoversight.org)

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is the Initial Agency Decision (IAD) to your August 12, 2019, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), FOIA Service. Your request was received by the VA FOIA Service on January 6, 2020, and assigned FOIA tracking numbers **20-03373-F**, **20-03374-F**, **20-03375-F**, and **20-03376-F**. You requested a copy of "All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, or calendar invitations) between any of the individuals listed in Column A and any of the individuals listed in Column B:

Column A: VA Officials	Column B: Concerned Veterans for America
i. Secretary Robert Wilkie	i. Pete Hegseth, including his capacity as former President and in any other capacity
ii. Deputy Secretary James Byrne	ii. Nathan Anderson, Executive Director
iii. Chief of Staff Pamela Powers	iii. Dan Caldwell, Senior Advisor
iv. Deputy Chief of Staff Christopher Syrek	iv. Shannon Hough, former Special Project Manager
v. Senior Advisor Colonel Andrew Gainey	v. Juliana Heerschap, Policy Director
vi. Former Senior Advisor to the Secretary Darin Selnick	vi. Herb Ford, General Counsel
vii. Senior Advisor for Strategic Communication Traci Scott	vii. Kyle Buckles, Communications Director
viii. COVER Commission Executive Director Casin Spero	viii. Rachel Tripp, Press Secretary
ix. Executive Director of the Center for Women Veterans Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd	ix. Jordan Daniel, Coalitions Director
x. Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs Brooks Tucker	x. John Byrnes, Foundation Director
xi. Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs James E. Hutton.	xi. Anyone communicating with an email address ending in cv4.org or cvafoundation.org
xii. Chief Veterans Experience Officer, Dr. Lynda Davis	

Mr. Austin Evers  
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March 26, 2020

Please provide records for a period of August 23, 2018, through the date of the search.”

On January 23, 2020, the VA FOIA Service referred the portion of your request pertaining to Robert Wilkie, James Byrne, Pamela Powers, Christopher Syrek, Andrew Gainey, Darin Selnick, Traci Scott, Casin Spero, and Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd to the VA Office of the Secretary (OSVA) for processing under FOIA tracking number **20-03373-F**. Our office received your request on January 23, 2020.

We conducted two searches for records responsive to your request specific to **20-03373-F**. These records cover the period of August 23, 2018 through January 30, 2020. Our searches consisted of the following:

1. From: Wilkie or Byrne or Powers or Syrek or Gainey or Selnick or Traci or Spero or Hayes-Byrd  
To: Hegseth or nanderson or dcaldwell or shough or jheerschap or hford or kbuckles or rtripp or jdaniel or jbyrnes or cv4a.org or cvafoundation.org; and,
2. To: Wilkie or Byrne or Powers or Syrek or Gainey or Selnick or Traci or Spero or Hayes-Byrd  
From: Hegseth or Anderson or Caldwell or Hough or Heerschap or Ford or Buckles or Tripp or Daniel or Byrnes or cv4a.org or cvafoundation.org.

A search of our records located 35 pages, Bates numbered (20-03373-F) – 000001 through (20-03373-F) – 000035, of responsive records. These records cover the period of August 23, 2018 through January 30, 2020. I have determined that 17 pages are releasable in their entirety and 18 pages are partially releasable pursuant to Title 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), FOIA Exemption 6.

**FOIA Exemption 6** exempts from disclosure of personnel or medical files and similar files the release of which would cause a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This requires a balancing of the public’s right to disclosure against the individual’s right to privacy. The privacy interests of the individuals in the records you have requested outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information. Any private interest you may have in that information does not factor into the aforementioned balancing test. Specifically, the information being withheld, as indicated on the enclosed documents, under FOIA Exemption 6, consists of names, identities, email addresses, VA usernames, phone numbers, cellular numbers, and facsimile numbers federal employees and private citizens; we however release the names of VA Senior Executives. Federal civilian employees and private citizens retain a significant privacy interest under certain circumstances, such as in instances where the release of their information could represent a threat to their well-being, harassment, or their ability to function within their sphere of employment. The federal civilian employees and private citizens whose information is at issue have a substantial privacy interest in their personal information. In weighing the private versus the public interest, except names of VA Senior Executives, we find that there is no public interest in knowing the names, identities, email addresses, VA usernames, phone numbers, cellular numbers, and facsimile numbers of federal civilian employees and private citizens. The coverage of FOIA Exemption 6 is absolute unless the FOIA requester can demonstrate a countervailing public interest in the requested information by demonstrating that the individual is in a position to provide the requested information to members of the general public and that the information requested contributes significantly to the public’s understanding of the activities of the Federal government. Additionally, the requester must demonstrate how the public’s need to understand the information significantly outweighs the privacy interest of the person to whom

Mr. Austin Evers  
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March 26, 2020

the information pertains. Upon consideration of the records, I have not been able to identify a countervailing public interest of sufficient magnitude to outweigh the privacy interest of the individuals whose names are redacted. The protected information has been redacted and (b)(6) inserted. "Withholding a telephone number or e-mail address, alone, is not sufficient to protect that [privacy] interest; alternate means of contacting and harassing these employees would be readily discoverable on the Internet if this court ordered their names disclosed." Long v. Immigration & Customs Enf't, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 160719 (D.C. Cir. 2017).

### **FOIA Mediation**

As part of the 2007 FOIA amendments, the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. Under the provisions of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, the following contact information is provided to assist FOIA requesters in resolving disputes:

#### **VA Central Office FOIA Public Liaison:**

Name: Doloras Johnson  
Email Address: [vacofoiaservice@va.gov](mailto:vacofoiaservice@va.gov)

#### **Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)**

Email Address: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Fax: 202-741-5769  
Mailing address:  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001

### **FOIA Appeal**

Please be advised that should you desire to do so, you may appeal the determination made in this response to:

Office of General Counsel (024)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

If you should choose to file an appeal, please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly indicate the basis for your disagreement with the determination set forth in this response. Please be advised that in accordance with VA's implementing FOIA regulations at 38 C.F.R. § 1.559, your appeal must be postmarked no later than ninety (90) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

Ruthann

Parise 941640

Ruthann Parise  
OSVA FOIA Officer

Digitally signed by Ruthann  
Parise 941640  
Date: 2020.03.26 08:14:58  
-04'00'

Enclosure: 35 pages responsive records

**From:** Nathan Anderson  
**Sent:** Thu, 30 May 2019 12:11:18 +0000  
**To:** Syrek, Christopher D. (Chris)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Nice meeting you

Hey Chris –

Likewise, it was nice to meet you. I'm in DC on a regular basis (with the exception of June). Maybe we could connect sometime in July?

**Nate Anderson**  
**Executive Director**  
Concerned Veterans for America  
C: (b)(6)

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**From:** "Syrek, Christopher D. (Chris)" (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 12:19 PM  
**To:** Nathan Anderson (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** Nice meeting you

Nathan,

Great meeting you today at the Secretary's breakfast. Hope you are adjusting to the new role.

Not sure what your schedule is or how often you are in DC, but let me know if you have anytime to grab lunch in the coming weeks.

Chris

Christopher D. Syrek  
Deputy Chief of Staff  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20420 (b)(6)

**From:** Powers, Pamela  
**Sent:** Thu, 25 Apr 2019 17:07:33 +0000  
**To:** Dan Caldwell  
**Subject:** RE: NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy

Very interesting stats. Thanks for sharing.

Great messaging by you on MA recently....we appreciate your voice combatting the rampant misinformation.

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**From:** Dan Caldwell <(b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 25, 2019 12:47 PM  
**To:** Powers, Pamela <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Tucker, Brooks <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] FW: NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy

Pam/Brooks <(b)(6)>

I hope all is well. Wanted to share the below and attached polling with you all. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

---

**From:** Dan Caldwell  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 24, 2019 2:26 PM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell <(b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** FW: NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy

All,

See below and attached.

I wanted to share with you the results of a poll of veterans and military families that we at CVA commissioned and which we released publicly today. It included questions on foreign policy, defense, and VA choice. Military Times just posted a great story on the foreign policy portion of the poll which you can read [here](#). Below press release is linked [here](#) as well.

In particular, from the below press release I wanted to highlight for you all:

#### **Veterans' Health Care**

- Nine-in-ten (90%) Veterans and 86% of Military Households favor giving veterans the choice to use their VA health care benefits outside of the existing system.

- Support for choice remains high – 79% of Veterans favor and 78% of Military Households favor – even when respondents are informed that veterans who exercise choice could pay a little more out of pocket for their care.
- Support for choice is also high among Veterans who report using the VA (79%) as their primary source of health care today, as well as seniors (92%).
- Support is also high regardless of political identity, with strong majorities of Veterans who identify as Republican (93%), Democrat (88%), and Independent (86%) favoring choice.

### **Foreign Policy**

- Very few Veterans (6%) and Military Households (13%) support the United States being more military engaged in conflicts around the world. In fact, a plurality (48%) of Veterans think the U.S. should be less engaged.
- A strong majority (60%) of both groups would support the President's decision to remove all troops from Afghanistan; less than one-third of both groups (32% - Veterans, 30% - Military Households) would oppose his decision.

### **Military spending, the debt, and BRAC**

- There isn't a strong appetite for increasing spending on the military. Just about one-third of both Veterans (32%) and Military Households (31%) say defense spending should be increased.
- When it comes to the U.S. national debt, just over three-quarters (76%) of Veterans and 71% of Military Households say the debt represents a threat to national security.
- Strong majorities of both Veterans (71%) and Military Households (63%) approve of the Base Realignment and Closure process

Also interesting numbers on Trump approval in the attached document as well.

If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss further, please let me know.

Thank you,

**Dan Caldwell**  
**Executive Director**  
 Concerned Veterans for America  
 C: (b)(6)

*Confidentiality:*

*The information contained in, and attached to, this communication may be confidential, and is intended only for the use of the recipient named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication, or any of its contents, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please re-send this communication to the sender and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer system. Thank you.*

From: (b)(6)@cv4a.org  
Sent: Wednesday, April 24, 2019 11:16 AM  
To: CVA - HQ <HQ@cv4a.org>

Subject: NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2019

CONTACT: [press@cv4a.org](mailto:press@cv4a.org)

703.224.3192

### **NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy**

*Nationwide survey shows support for Afghanistan and Syria  
withdrawal and Trump Administration efforts to expand veterans'  
health care choice*

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A new poll commissioned by Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) and conducted by In Pursuit Of, LLC shows veterans and military family members favor increased choice in the delivery of veterans' health care, a more restrained foreign policy, and a more responsible approach to federal spending and the national debt.

The poll, a nationwide survey of 1,600 veterans and military households, comes as lawmakers from both sides of the aisle vigorously debate the VA's role in veterans' health care.

**"The results are clear: veterans and military families support giving those who use the VA health care system the choice to use their benefits in the community,"** said Dan Caldwell, CVA executive director. **"Elected officials looking to restrict policies that give veterans more health care choice, like the new VA MISSION Act access standards, stand in opposition to the will of the veteran community. We are hopeful the Trump Administration and Congress continue to pursue policies that give veterans more**

**control over their health care.”**

The poll also comes after President Trump stated his desire to bring American troops home from conflicts that we have been fighting for over 17 years.

**“Veterans and military families have borne the brunt of America’s endless wars and after nearly two decades of fighting, there is clear support among both groups for a new approach to American foreign policy,”** Caldwell continued. **“Relatedly, the vast majority of veterans and military families do not support massive increases in defense spending and appear more concerned about the negative consequences of our growing national debt. President Trump would have strong support from these communities if he were to follow through on his promise to remove U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Syria and get serious about our country’s financial future.”**

Some key findings of the poll include:

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Veterans and 71% of Military Households say the debt represents a threat to national security.

- Strong majorities of both Veterans (71%) and Military Households (63%) approve of the Base Realignment and Closure process

**View the complete survey results [here](#).**

#### Methodology

Interviews were conducted online April 5-14, 2019 among 800 Veterans and 800 Military Households. Results based on each full sample of N=800 have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points. The research was conducted by In Pursuit Of. After collection, weighting was applied to the Veteran sample using publicly-available figures on the Veteran population. Representation was approximated by using quotas for the Veteran sample on gender, age, ethnicity, and region of the country.

#### Veterans

The sample of 800 veterans was comprised strictly of individuals who served in the military but no longer serve and self-identified as a veteran.

#### Military Households

The sample of 800 military households was comprised of 1) active duty service members, including those serving in the reserves or in the National Guard; and 2a) individuals with a member of their household or immediate family currently serving on active duty, in the reserves, or in the National guard, or b) individuals with a member of their household or immediate family having served but no longer serving and self-identified as a veteran.

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Concerned Veterans For America, 1310 N. Courthouse Rd. Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22201 United States

**From:** Dan Caldwell  
**Sent:** Thu, 25 Apr 2019 16:47:16 +0000  
**To:** Powers, Pamela (b)(6) Tucker, Brooks  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] FW: NEW POLL: Veterans and Military Families support VA choice, more restrained foreign policy  
**Attachments:** I20190424\_PO-CVA-Survey\_Interview-Schedule\_Release.pdf

Pam/Brooks (b)(6)

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Thank you!

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April 24, 2019

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**after nearly two decades of fighting, there is clear support among both groups for a new approach to American foreign policy,” Caldwell continued. “Relatedly, the vast majority of veterans and military families do not support massive increases in defense spending and appear more concerned about the negative consequences of our growing national debt. President Trump would have strong support from these communities if he were to follow through on his promise to remove U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Syria and get serious about our country’s financial future.”**

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Concerned Veterans For America, 1310 N. Courthouse Rd. Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22201 United States

## CONCERNED VETERANS FOR AMERICA

### National Online Survey

N=800 Veterans

N=800 Military Households

April 5-14, 2019

- 
- An asterisk (\*) in a response category means that less than 0.5% of respondents chose that response category, and a dash (--) represents no response.
  - Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.
  - Interviews were conducted online April 5-14, 2019 among 800 Veterans and 800 Military Households. Results based on each full sample of N=800 have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points. The research was conducted by In Pursuit Of. After collection, weighting was applied to the Veteran sample using publicly-available figures on the Veteran population. Representation was approximated by using quotas for the Veteran sample on gender, age, ethnicity, and region of the country.
- 

1. Generally speaking, do you feel things in the country are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
48%	49%	Right direction
52%	51%	Wrong track

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as President? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>56%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>TOTAL APPROVE</b>
<b>44%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSAPPROVE</b>
31%	24%	Strongly approve
26%	27%	Somewhat approve
11%	19%	Somewhat disapprove
32%	31%	Strongly disapprove

3. Thinking specifically about the issue of foreign policy...do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing on foreign policy? **(ROTATED)**

<b>VETs</b>	<b>HHs</b>	
<b>56%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>TOTAL APPROVE</b>
<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSAPPROVE</b>
30%	22%	Strongly approve
26%	29%	Somewhat approve
14%	19%	Somewhat disapprove
30%	30%	Strongly disapprove

4. From the list of issues below, please select the one you believe to be the **most important** issue facing the country today, and the one you believe to be the **least important** issue facing the country today. **(RANDOMIZED)**

**Most Important**

<b>VETs</b>	<b>HHs</b>	
30%	22%	Immigration and border security
17%	16%	Health care
13%	9%	Spending and our national debt
9%	12%	National security/military issues
8%	12%	Jobs and the economy
5%	6%	Energy and the environment
5%	7%	Race relations/racism
4%	4%	Veterans issues
3%	4%	Taxes
2%	6%	Education
2%	2%	Other (please specify)
1%	1%	Don't Know

**Least Important**

<b>VETs</b>	<b>HHs</b>	
26%	18%	Race relations/racism
15%	12%	Energy and the environment
13%	14%	Immigration and border security
8%	12%	Taxes
7%	7%	Education
7%	9%	Spending and our national debt
6%	4%	Jobs and the economy
3%	3%	Health care
3%	4%	Veterans issues
2%	4%	National security/military issues
1%	*	Other (please specify)
10%	12%	Don't Know

5. Should the United States be more or less militarily engaged in conflicts around the world, or stay about the same?

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
6%	13%	More
48%	41%	Less
43%	41%	Stay about the same
3%	5%	Don't know

6. Do you think it's necessary for the safety of the United States to continue keeping troops in Afghanistan? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
38%	39%	Yes, it is necessary
43%	40%	No, it is not necessary
18%	21%	Don't know

7. If the President were to authorize that all U.S. troops be removed from Afghanistan, would you support or oppose that decision? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>60%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>
<b>32%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>
28%	28%	Strongly support
31%	32%	Somewhat support
23%	19%	Somewhat oppose
10%	11%	Strongly oppose
8%	10%	Don't know

8. As you may know, U.S. troops have been in Syria battling ISIS since 2014. As of today, ISIS has lost all of their land. Some military experts say ISIS has been decimated and the U.S. should remove troops from Syria. Other experts say ISIS has retreated underground and will emerge again once the U.S. leaves. In thinking about this...do you think it's necessary for the safety of the United States to continue keeping troops in Syria? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
55%	54%	Yes, it is necessary
31%	30%	No, it is not necessary
14%	16%	Don't know

9. If the President were to authorize that all U.S. troops be removed from Syria, would you support or oppose that decision? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
49%	50%	<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>
44%	39%	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>
22%	23%	Strongly support
27%	28%	Somewhat support
30%	24%	Somewhat oppose
14%	15%	Strongly oppose
7%	11%	Don't know

Thinking now about Congress and the President as it relates to military authority...

10. Who should have the authority to send American troops into military conflicts around the world? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
23%	21%	The President
16%	19%	Congress
60%	56%	Both President and Congress
1%	4%	Don't know

11. How would you describe the balance of authority in practice as it stands today when it comes to military action? Of the following choices, which would you agree with the most? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
48%	35%	The balance of authority between the President and Congress is where it should be
31%	34%	The President has too much authority, and more authority needs to be given to Congress
16%	22%	Congress has too much authority, and more authority needs to be given to the President
6%	10%	Don't know

Still thinking about this issue...

12. Please select which of the following viewpoints you agree with the most. **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
60%	49%	The President must have the ability and flexibility to send troops wherever is needed to protect U.S. interests without Congressional approval since he can't be expected to wait for Congress to agree to authorize the use of force.
31%	36%	The executive branch, including Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump, have exercised too much authority when it comes to using military force, and the power of Congress to authorize force should be restored.
9%	15%	Don't know

13. Which of the following should the United States do when it comes to spending on the military by the Pentagon? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
32%	31%	Increase spending
15%	24%	Decrease spending
50%	38%	Keep spending levels about the same
3%	7%	Don't know

14. As you might know, the U.S. national debt is more than \$22 trillion. How much of a threat do you believe the national debt is to our national security? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>76%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>TOTAL EXTREME/SOMEWHAT OF A THREAT</b>
<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>TOTAL VERY LITTLE/NO THREAT AT ALL</b>
31%	27%	Extreme threat
44%	45%	Somewhat of a threat
18%	16%	Very little threat
3%	5%	No threat at all
4%	8%	Don't know

15. Do you approve or disapprove of the Base Realignment and Closure process, also known as BRAC, which closes or repurposes obsolete or duplicative military bases as a way to streamline the military and save taxpayer money? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>71%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>TOTAL APPROVE</b>
<b>21%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>TOTAL DISAPPROVE</b>
23%	18%	Strongly approve
47%	44%	Somewhat approve
14%	13%	Somewhat disapprove
7%	5%	Strongly disapprove
8%	20%	Don't know

Thinking now about the Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA...

16. From what you know, how would you rate the overall quality of the benefits and services military veterans receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>39%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>TOTAL EXCELLENT/GOOD</b>
<b>59%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAIR/POOR</b>

8%	7%	Excellent
31%	26%	Good
35%	34%	Fair
23%	30%	Poor
2%	4%	Don't know

17. And what about health care, specifically...how would you rate the quality of health care military veterans receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>40%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>TOTAL EXCELLENT/GOOD</b>
<b>57%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAIR/POOR</b>

8%	7%	Excellent
31%	25%	Good
35%	35%	Fair
22%	28%	Poor
3%	5%	Don't know

18. Do you think the health care provided to veterans from the VA has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same over the last five years? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
36%	23%	Gotten better
23%	34%	Gotten worse
35%	34%	Stayed about the same
6%	9%	Don't know

19. Do you think the health care that U.S. veterans receive from VA medical facilities is generally better than, generally worse than, or about the same as health care that most Americans receive? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
20%	17%	Generally better
42%	46%	Generally worse
31%	28%	About the same
7%	9%	Don't know

**20.** How important is it to you that lawmakers in Washington reform the way in which health care services are provided to U.S. veterans? Is it...? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
30%	28%	Absolutely essential
47%	42%	Very important
17%	22%	Of average importance
3%	3%	Of little importance
1%	2%	Not important at all
2%	4%	Don't know

**21.** Do you favor or oppose giving veterans the choice to use their VA health care benefits at medical facilities or health care providers outside of the VA's existing medical system? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>90%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAVOR</b>
<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>

53%	50%	Strongly favor
37%	36%	Somewhat favor
5%	6%	Somewhat oppose
2%	2%	Strongly oppose
3%	5%	Don't know

**22.** Do you favor or oppose giving veterans the choice to use their VA health care benefits at medical facilities or health care providers outside of the VA's existing medical system, even if it means they could pay a little more out of pocket? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>79%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAVOR</b>
<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>

38%	36%	Strongly favor
41%	42%	Somewhat favor
11%	12%	Somewhat oppose
6%	3%	Strongly oppose
4%	7%	Don't know

**23.** Based on what you know, do you believe the VA has enough funding to take care of the needs of our nation's veterans? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
21%	26%	Yes
58%	57%	No
20%	18%	Don't know

Thinking now about your personal experience...

**24.** Regardless of whether or not you have accessed medical care through the VA, in your opinion, how easy or difficult is it to access medical care through the VA? Would you say it is...? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>36%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>TOTAL EASY</b>
<b>53%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>TOTAL DIFFICULT</b>

11%	7%	Very easy
24%	25%	Somewhat easy
38%	41%	Somewhat difficult
15%	16%	Very difficult
11%	12%	Don't know

**25.** Regardless of whether or not you have accessed medical care through the VA, in your opinion, do you think the wait times to receive medical care at VA facilities are reasonable or unreasonable? Would you say they are...? **(ROTATED)**

<u>VETs</u>	<u>HHs</u>	
<b>35%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>TOTAL REASONABLE</b>
<b>56%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>TOTAL UNREASONABLE</b>

8%	6%	Very reasonable
27%	23%	Somewhat reasonable
36%	38%	Somewhat unreasonable
21%	22%	Very unreasonable
8%	11%	Don't know

**From:** Powers, Pamela  
**Sent:** Wed, 10 Apr 2019 16:02:40 +0000  
**To:** Dan Caldwell  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: CVA to Senate Panel: Don't restrict veterans' access to the health care they deserve

Thanks Dan.

---

**From:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6) <[REDACTED]@cv4a.org>  
**Date:** Wednesday, Apr 10, 2019, 11:46 AM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6) <[REDACTED]@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] FW: CVA to Senate Panel: Don't restrict veterans' access to the health care they deserve

All,

Please see the below statement from Concerned Veterans for America on today's Senate hearing on the VA's new community care (aka private sector) program. We are becoming increasingly concerned that members of the House and Senate might attempt to roll back veterans health care choice which will be expanded under proposed regulations that are set to be implemented on June 6<sup>th</sup> as part of the VA MISSION Act.

Three other things to note:

1. Today is the fifth anniversary of the Phoenix VA wait list scandal – where dozens of veterans died on secret wait lists while waiting for care. More on that [here](#).
2. I had an op-ed run in The Hill today urging Congress not to roll back veterans health care choice through the VA: <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/438119-dont-roll-back-veterans-health-care-choice>
3. I recently did an interview with VA Secretary Wilkie on the VA MISSION Act and other issues pertaining to the VA. We released the first clip today, which focused on the VA MISSION Act: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrcwyCtfPdw>

If you would like to speak further about any of these issues, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you,

Dan Caldwell  
Executive Director  
Concerned Veterans for America

---

**From:** (b)(6) <[REDACTED]@cv4a.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 10, 2019 10:32 AM

To: CVA - HQ <HQ@cv4a.org>

Subject: CVA to Senate Panel: Don't restrict veterans' access to the health care they deserve



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 10, 2019

CONTACT: [press@cv4a.org](mailto:press@cv4a.org)

703.224.3192

# CVA to Senate Panel: Don't restrict veterans' access to the health care they deserve

*Grassroots veterans group offers testimony on VA MISSION Act access standards ahead of Senate hearing*

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**ARLINGTON, Va.**—As the nation remembers the veterans' lives lost from the Phoenix VA waitlist scandal, which broke five years ago today, the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee is [holding a hearing](#) to discuss the proposed access standards by which more veterans would have greater options in where they get health care under the VA MISSION Act. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) issued the following statement to accompany its written testimony to the committee, reminding Senators and the American public of the importance of expanding access to care for veterans and the cost of maintaining the status quo.

**“Five years ago, America found out about one of the most egregious examples of what lack of access to care truly costs,”** said Dan Caldwell, CVA executive director. **“Congress has been working since then to rectify this wrong, and last year, with the signing of the VA MISSION Act, we took a big step in the right direction to provide more veterans the options they deserve to get the care they need. As the administration continues working to implement this transformational law, we urge Congress to resist any and all efforts to roll back the provisions that increase health care choice for veterans. Veterans dying waiting for care in Phoenix and at other VA facilities was a preventable tragedy. We should learn from**

**those stark lessons and work to ensure no veteran suffers waiting for access to care.”**

Caldwell, on behalf of CVA and its grassroots network of volunteers and activists, submitted [this testimony](#) to the committee.

CVA released [this statement](#) when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [publicly released its draft standards](#) for the new community care program mandated by the VA MISSION Act.

The VA MISSION Act was endorsed by [over 30 veteran service organizations](#); it was passed with [overwhelming bipartisan support](#) (347-70 in the House and 92-5 in the Senate); and [signed](#) into law by President Trump in June 2018.

###

*Concerned Veterans for America advocates for policies that will preserve the freedom and prosperity that ill members and families so proudly fought and defended. The goal is to translate the experience, concerns and hopes unique to veterans and their families into a common vision of freedom, and to speak out on issues that threaten to cripple not only our economic and national security, but the spirit of opportunity and liberty that all Americans cherish. For more information, visit [www.cv4a.org](http://www.cv4a.org).*

If you would rather not receive future communications from Concerned Veterans For America, let us know by clicking [here](#).  
Concerned Veterans For America, 1310 N. Courthouse Rd. Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22201 United States

**From:** Spero, Casin D.  
**Sent:** Fri, 25 Jan 2019 15:37:18 -0500  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: REMINDER: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 29, 2019

Thank you! See you next week.

---

**From:** (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Date:** Friday, January 25, 2019 at 3:10 PM  
**To:** "Spero, Casin D." (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: REMINDER: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 29, 2019

Thanks! I'll need an escort to the meeting rooms.

**Info about CVA:**

Concerned Veterans for America is a grassroots network of veterans, family members, and citizens of roughly 12,000 volunteers and activists in 14 states. Through grassroots activity, educational efforts, and accountability campaigns, the organization advocates for and defends policies and leaders to preserve and promote the freedom and prosperity for which its members, fellow veterans, and their families so proudly fought and sacrificed to defend. CVA is driven to organize and amplify the American veteran's unique perspective to both the American people and our leaders in Washington.

**My Bio:**

(b)(6) is the policy director at Concerned Veterans for America (CVA). Prior to joining CVA, she worked on Capitol Hill for over eight years working for three members of Congress. Her time on the Hill included serving as legislative director and handling a diverse portfolio of policy areas including defense, health care, and veterans affairs for over four years for Rep. Tim Huelskamp (KS-01), an active member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Later she worked as communications director for Rep. Dave Brat (VA-7). Both of her parents served in the Army. She has a BA in Communications from Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio.

(b)(6)  
Director of Policy Engagement, Concerned Veterans for America  
m (b)(6) | e (b)(6)@cv4a.org

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**From:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 24, 2019 9:27 AM  
**To:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>

**Cc:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>

**Subject:** REMINDER: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 29, 2019

Good Morning,

Thank you for agreeing to join the COVER Commission next week for a VSO Listening Session.

The meetings will begin at 0930 at the 811 Vermont Avenue on January 29, 2019, a full meeting agenda is attached including room numbers. If you do not have access to VA buildings, please let me know when you confirm your attendance and arrangements will be made to escort you to the meeting rooms. A catered lunch will be provided, if you have food allergies or preferences please note that in your reply.

Attached you will find briefing material and biographies for the Commissioners. If possible, please provide me with a personal bio and any general information on your organization (mission, vision, membership information, etc.) by Friday for review by the Commissioners.

Please feel free to call or email with any questions or if you need any information.

Look forward to seeing you next week.

Best,

Casin

Casin Spero  
Chief Advisor  
COVER Commission  
C: (b)(6)

**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Wed, 23 Jan 2019 20:35:54 +0000  
**To:** Spero, Casin D.  
**Cc:** Dan Caldwell  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Casin,

Just wanted to follow up and get any additional details you might have so I can get it added to my calendar. (time, location, etc)

(b)(6)

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**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 17, 2019 11:11 AM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell <(b)(6)@cv4a.org>; Spero, Casin D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Casin,

Yes – I can attend. Just send me the details when you have them. Thanks.

(b)(6)

Director of Policy Engagement, Concerned Veterans for America  
m: (b)(6) | e: (b)(6)@cv4a.org

---

**From:** Dan Caldwell <(b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 17, 2019 10:45 AM  
**To:** Spero, Casin D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)@cv4a.org  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Casin – I want to introduce you to (b)(6) CVA's policy director, who may be able to attend this in my place.

You may remember (b)(6) from her work with Rep. Tim Huelskamp.

(b)(6)

if you are able to attend the below meeting let Casin know thanks!

Dan Caldwell  
Executive Director

Concerned Veterans for America

C: (b)(6)

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**From:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 10, 2019 1:00 PM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

That would be fine!

---

**From:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Date:** Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 12:59 PM  
**To:** "Spero, Casin D." <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Due to travel – I might need to send another staffer is that alright?

**Dan Caldwell**  
**Executive Director**  
Concerned Veterans for America  
C: (b)(6)

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**From:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 10, 2019 12:57 PM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Dan,

Greatly apologize for the inconvenience, but due to an unforeseen admin issue, we have had to move the meetings to January 29<sup>th</sup>. Hope you can still attend.

Any questions let me know.

Thank you!

Casin

---

**From:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 2:08 PM  
**To:** "Spero, Casin D." (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

I have a hold on my calendar. Look forward to attending!

**Dan Caldwell**  
**Executive Director**  
Concerned Veterans for America  
C (b)(6)

*Confidentiality:*

*The information contained in, and attached to, this communication may be confidential, and is intended only for the use of the recipient named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication, or any of its contents, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please re-send this communication to the sender and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer system. Thank you.*

**From:** Spero, Casin D. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 08, 2019 1:51 PM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019

Good Afternoon Dan,

Sorry for the delay in following up, but had a few issues come up with some other meetings related to the shutdown that caught my attention. I have attached a letter of invitation from the Chairman and one-pager about the COVER commission as discussed on our call. I have also sent hard copies of these documents via USPS.

Again, we are still working on hammering out an agenda while we wait for RSVP's to come in, but we are looking at a multi hour meeting where VSO' reps from various groups will meet with breakout groups of Commissioners. Specific topics and discussion points will be sent leading up to the meeting.

If you believe you can attend let me know and I will stay in touch as we get closer to the day with more information. Any questions feel free to give me a call.

Thank you!

Casin

Chief Advisor and Staff Director  
COVER Commission

C: (b)(6)

E: (b)(6)@va.gov

**From:** Spero, Casin D.  
**Sent:** Tue, 8 Jan 2019 13:51:06 -0500  
**To:** Dan Caldwell  
**Subject:** COVER Commission VSO Listening Session - January 28, 2019  
**Attachments:** VSO Listening Session\_CVA.pdf, Cover Commission General Information 110818.pdf

Good Afternoon Dan,

Sorry for the delay in following up, but had a few issues come up with some other meetings related to the shutdown that caught my attention. I have attached a letter of invitation from the Chairman and one-pager about the COVER commission as discussed on our call. I have also sent hard copies of these documents via USPS.

Again, we are still working on hammering out an agenda while we wait for RSVP's to come in, but we are looking at a multi hour meeting where VSO' reps from various groups will meet with breakout groups of Commissioners. Specific topics and discussion points will be sent leading up to the meeting.

If you believe you can attend let me know and I will stay in touch as we get closer to the day with more information. Any questions feel free to give me a call.

Thank you!  
Casin

Chief Advisor and Staff Director  
COVER Commission

C: (b)(6)  
E: (b)(6)@va.gov

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# COVER COMMISSION

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Dan Caldwell  
Executive Director  
Concerned Veterans for America  
1310 N. Courthouse Rd., Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Caldwell,

As Chairman of the Creating Options for Veterans Expedited Recovery Commission, referred to as the COVER Commission, I would like to invite you to meet with members of the Commission on January 28, 2019, in Washington, D.C.

As background, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA), Section 931 (Public Law 114-198), mandates the establishment of the COVER Commission to examine the evidence-based therapy treatment model used by the Department of Veterans Affairs for treating mental health conditions of veterans and the potential benefits of incorporating complementary and integrative health (CIH) treatments available in non-VA facilities (as defined in section 1701 of title 38, US Code). I have attached a one-page information sheet on COVER and more specific information will be provided ahead of the meeting to inform your conversations with Commissioners.

This Commission has the potential to change the way in which our nation's Veterans receive mental healthcare and the type and quality of that care. It is imperative that the Veteran Service Organizations are represented throughout the process as we work to build recommendations for the President, Senate, and House of Representatives. We have heard the calls of the VSO's to have not just a seat at the table, but an active role in shaping VA policy, and for that reason, we are soliciting input from every generation of Veterans at the local and national level. I hope you can take the opportunity to both learn about our work and help us complete our mission.

If you can attend or would like more information, please contact Casin Spero, Chief Advisor, at (b)(6)@va.gov or (b)(6)

Respectfully,



Jake Leinenkugel  
Chairman  
COVER Commission

Attachments: COVER Commission General Information

# COVER Commission: Creating Options for Veterans' Expedited Recovery



**MISSION:** The COVER Commission was established under the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA). The Commission's purpose is to examine the evidence-based therapy treatment model used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for treating mental health conditions of Veterans and the potential benefits of incorporating complementary and integrative health treatments available in non-Department facilities.

**MEMBERS:** The Commission Chair, Thomas "Jake" Leinenkugel, and Co-Chairman, Thomas Beeman, were appointed by the President. Commissioners Wayne Jonas, Matthew Amidon, John M. "Jack" Rose, Thomas Harvey, Jamil Kahn, Michael Potoczniak, Shira Maguen, and Matthew Kuntz were appointed by the House and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders.

**CHARGE:** Over an 18-month period, the Commission will complete 5 duties and provide recommendations, no later than December 2019, to the President, House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees and Secretary of VA.

## Five Duties of the Commission

1. Examine the efficacy of the evidence-based therapy model used by the Secretary for treating mental health illnesses of Veterans and identify areas to improve wellness-based outcomes.
2. Conduct a patient-centered survey within each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks to examine:
  - A. the experience of Veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs when seeking medical assistance for mental health issues through the health care system of the Department;
  - B. the experience of Veterans with non-Department facilities and health professionals for treating mental health issues;
  - C. the preference of Veterans regarding available treatment for mental health issues and which methods the Veterans believe to be most effective;
  - D. the experience, if any, of Veterans with respect to the complementary and integrative health treatment therapies described in paragraph (3);
  - E. the prevalence of prescribing prescription medication among Veterans seeking treatment through the health care system of the Department as remedies for addressing mental health issues; and
  - F. the outreach efforts of the Secretary regarding the availability of benefits and treatments for Veterans for addressing mental health issues, including by identifying ways to reduce barriers to gaps in such benefits and treatments.
3. Examine available research on complementary and integrative health approaches for mental health issues and identify what benefits could be made by including: music therapy, equine therapy, training and caring for service dogs, yoga therapy, acupuncture therapy, meditation therapy, outdoor sports therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, accelerated resolution therapy, art therapy, magnetic resonance therapy, and others.
4. Study the sufficiency of the resources of the Department to ensure the delivery of quality health care for mental health issues among Veterans seeking treatment within the Department.
5. Study the current treatments and resources available within the Department and assess:
  - A. the effectiveness of such treatments and resources in decreasing the number of suicides per day;
  - B. the number of Veterans who have been diagnosed with mental health issues;
  - C. the percentage of Veterans using the resources of the Department who have been diagnosed with mental health issues;
  - D. the percentage of Veterans who have completed counseling sessions offered by the Department; and
  - E. the efforts of the Department to expand complementary and integrative health treatments viable to the recovery of Veterans with mental health issues as determined by the Secretary to improve the effectiveness of treatments offered by the Department.

Contact COVER Commission members and support staff at: [COVERCommission@va.gov](mailto:COVERCommission@va.gov). Information about Commission meetings is posted in the Federal Advisory Committee Act Database. <https://www.facadatabase.gov>

VA-20-0001-A-000031

**From:** Powers, Pamela  
**Sent:** Fri, 21 Dec 2018 00:47:39 +0000  
**To:** Dan Caldwell  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Follow Up From Today's Meeting

Thank you, Dan. Secretary Wilkie strongly believes that all organizations who serve veterans should have a voice and a seat at the table. We have try very hard to be transparent and to solicit feedback so I am very glad to hear our efforts are appreciated. You had a great point today when you said that some are not happy with the new way of doing things.

(b)(6) and (b)(6) are fantastic and are working very hard. I will pass on your kudos because they deserve some recognition, for sure.

Thanks for all you do for Veterans.

Merry Christmas!

Pam

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**From:** Dan Caldwell (b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 20, 2018 4:25:24 PM  
**To:** Powers, Pamela  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Follow Up From Today's Meeting

Pam,

I hope all is well.

First off, I wanted to thank you and the Secretary for including Concerned Veterans for America in these VSO breakfasts. We have a unique perspective on certain issues and I am glad that you are willing to hear us out – even if we don't wind up agreeing on everything. I also appreciate the candor from you and Secretary Wilkie which is something that was sadly not present under Secretary Shulkin.

Additionally, I wanted to reiterate that I think the current structure and frequency of stakeholder meetings (VSO breakfasts, round tables) is excellent. I think the way the quarterly meetings are structured is especially helpful and allows me to send the appropriate staff to the appropriate breakouts. Additionally, I have found Jacob, Heather, and Jason extremely responsive to any inquiries that we have.

Thank you again for all that you do and I hope you have a happy holidays.

Sincerely,

**Dan Caldwell**  
**Executive Director**  
Concerned Veterans for America  
C (b)(5)

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**From:** Dan Caldwell  
**Sent:** Tue, 11 Dec 2018 14:49:32 +0000  
**To:** Spero, Casin D.  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: COVER Commission Meetings

Casin – thanks for reaching out. I have some thoughts I can share re: Arizona. Lets find a time to chat.

Thank you for the invite as well to the hearing in January. You guys are doing good work.

Give my regards to Jake.

Thanks,

**Dan Caldwell**  
**Executive Director**  
Concerned Veterans for America  
C: (b)(6)

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**From:** Spero, Casin D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 06, 2018 11:10 AM  
**To:** Dan Caldwell <(b)(6)@cv4a.org>  
**Subject:** COVER Commission Meetings

Hi Dan,

Wanted to touch base on a couple of COVER Commission items coming up. These are both close hold items as we have not yet published our upcoming meetings in the federal register.

1. In February, the full Commission will travel to Arizona, with the original intent of visiting the Northern Arizon VA Healthcare System in Prescott for 2 day. We have decided to possibly add stops in Tucson and Phoenix during the week as well. Given your experience with Veterans issues in the state, I wanted to reach out to see if there are any groups, non-profits, public entities, or state/local level programs we should meet with/evaluate as it relates to our mission to evaluate mental healthcare services at VA. I can provide you with more info on or scope if it helps, but anything that comes to mind is worth us looking into.

2. At the end of January, the Commission will likely be in DC and looking to meet with Veterans groups, and would welcome your presence if you are available. More to follow.

Again, I do ask you to keep these items close hold while we notify our other VSO partners and publish the notice of meeting.

Thanks,  
Casin