



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



## NFFE News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2023

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## NFFE Opposes VA “Accountability” Bills Aimed at Stripping Federal Employees of their Workplace Rights

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs held a hearing to discuss accountability and transparency within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and to ask questions of senior VA officials. The Committee also debated various legislation affecting VA operations and employees, including the Restore VA Accountability Act.

The National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) stands united in opposition to the Restore Act [with our union partners](#), who collectively represent hundreds of thousands of VA employees. The legislation would restore the previously failed VA Accountability Act of 2017. The original bill was signed into law under former President Trump to covertly strip away the rights and due process protections of VA employees, a third of whom are proud veterans themselves.

The VA Accountability Act of 2017 failed to achieve the supposed intent of increasing accountability at the VA. Due to numerous flaws, violations of established case law and merit principles, and many federal legal challenges, the VA Accountability Act was eventually made obsolete when the VA suspended the authorities granted by the law earlier this year.

If reinstated, the Restore Act would override collective bargaining agreements for VA healthcare providers, and even those who do not treat veterans, like VA police officers, firefighters, plumbers, electricians, and other staff. The legislation also lowers the burden of proof when reviewing employee misconduct allegations, required only “substantial evidence,” as opposed to the widely used “preponderance of the evidence,” allowing for VA employees to be wrongly disciplined or terminated.

Today’s hearing addressed other bills which NFFE opposes in their current forms, including the VA CAREERS Act. In addition, NFFE opposes the Veterans HEALTH Act and the Veterans Community Care Act, which encourage the outsourcing and privatization of VA care.

“Proud nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professionals at the VA will not tolerate a return to a hostile work environment if the VA Accountability Act is restored,” continued Erwin. “Many will leave for positions outside of federal service and it will prove increasingly difficult to replace their experience and professionalism. For years, the VA has faced challenges with recruitment and retention. Right now, the department is experiencing a staffing crisis. Should the VA Accountability Act be restored, these issues will only be exacerbated, and our nation’s veterans will suffer the consequences.”

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*Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is America’s first union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents approximately 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to [www.nffe.org](http://www.nffe.org).*