



(January 15, 2016)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing: McCain Fires Off Angry Letter Over VA Reappointments – Federal Times**

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Sen. John McCain is not happy that two Veterans Affairs executives accused of mismanagement are back at work and he let department secretary Bob McDonald know it.

In a Jan. 13 letter to McDonald, the Arizona Republican demanded to know why Lance Robinson and Brad Curry working at a VA hospital outside Phoenix after being on administrative leave for more than a year in a half.

"I continue to be extremely disappointed by the VA's refusal to hold senior executives accountable for manipulating veterans' wait-times in order to get bigger bonuses," McCain said in a statement. "By allowing these individuals to return to work, the VA has clearly demonstrated that these cases will drag on even longer."

Related: [Read the letter.](#)

In the letter to McDonald, McCain demands an explanation for why the cases have not been resolved and chastises VA officials who he said repeatedly offered incorrect testimony at the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, which later had to be corrected.

The VA was investigating Robinson and Curry following a scandal involving a backlog of patient wait times was uncovered in 2014. The pair was placed on administrative leave in May 2014, pending an investigation by the department.

VA Deputy Chief of Staff Hughes Turner issued a proposal to fire Robinson on May 30, 2014, but the firing never came.

Under Secretary for Health, Dr. David Shulkin later testified before [the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on Dec. 14](#) that the agency had not yet terminated Robinson because the U.S. Attorney's Office

had not cleared witnesses the VA wished to interview related to the case while a criminal investigation was ongoing.

But Robinson's attorney refuted those statements and released testimony that she said showed the executive testified on multiple occasions, making the unique defense that the agency couldn't fire Robinson because he was innocent.

"The VA has spent the last year and a half squandering taxpayer dollars on repeated internal investigations into the same unfounded allegations in an attempt to substantiate a baseless removal action, said Julia Perkins, Robinson's attorney, in a statement. "All this while, Mr. Robinson has been patiently waiting for the truth to come out."

Multiple news outlets reported on Jan. 8 that Robinson and Curry would return to work on Jan. 11. Perkins said in a statement that "Mr. Robinson is happy he has been returned to duty and his life's work of serving veterans."

VA officials were not immediately available for comment.