



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON
August 1, 2012

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your cosigned letter regarding the membership criteria for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee (NAC).

VA is committed to ensuring that its affiliation with Veterans Service Organizations befits the Department's mission, integrity, and reputation in serving the Nation's Veterans. To that extent, we will review the membership criteria and standard operating procedures for the NAC. The Department will also monitor Government investigations of NAC members, including the Veterans Support Organization, and retains the authority to rescind NAC membership unilaterally. Pending the results of the Government's investigation, we have temporarily suspended the Veterans Support Organization's membership on the NAC and have notified them accordingly.

This issue has highlighted that VA lacks a meaningful review process and clear standards that it can apply to all those Veterans, Military and other Non-Governmental Service Organizations that serve Veterans while using the Department's name or relationship in the furtherance of their activities. While the overwhelming number of these organizations conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, VA will establish a Task Force, led by a senior executive, to define needed standards of conduct that can serve as a prerequisite for a relationship with this Department. Input will be solicited from stakeholders as we review this issue during the remainder of 2012.

A similar letter has been sent to the cosigners of your letter. Thank you for your continuing support of our mission, and for raising this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned above the printed name.

Eric K. Shinseki