

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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VA providing unprecedented transparency to Congress

WASHINGTON – Today VA announced that the department is providing a new and unprecedented level of transparency to lawmakers in Congress.

For years under previous administrations, Congressional critics have [taken the department to task](#) for not providing enough information to the legislative branch.

VA is setting new standards for cooperation with Congress, and that close working relationship has helped the department achieve more substantive reforms than at any other time in decades, including passage of the MISSION Act and electronic health record modernization.

As part of that cooperation, the department is providing more information to lawmakers than at any other time in recent history. In fact, during fiscal year 2018:

- VA witnesses participated in 71 congressional hearings and roundtables, a 20 percent increase over FY 2017
- VA conducted a total of 1,302 congressional briefings, a 66 percent increase over FY17
 - VA conducted 439 proactive congressional briefings, a 155 percent increase over FY17
 - Since the landmark MISSION Act became law in June 2018, VA has conducted 20 separate congressional briefings on its implementation status alone
- VA responded to 2,814 requests for information, a 28 percent increase over FY 2017
- VA responded to 369 letters from members of Congress concerning policy issues, an increase from 355 in FY 2017
- VA responded to 41,852 constituent letters and inquiries originating from congressional offices

“When it comes to transparency, VA is setting new standards, and the results are clear for our nation’s Veterans,” Secretary Wilkie said. “Under President Trump’s leadership, the department is now the first hospital system in the nation to post online its hospital wait times, opioid prescription rates, accountability and settlement info, and chief executive travel. All the while, we are keeping lawmakers informed through multiple means regarding the great reforms and progress across the department, and we will continue to do so.”

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