

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# News Release

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## VA resetting relationship with labor unions

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs is taking steps to reestablish its relationship with bargaining unit employees effective July 20.

At VA the employees, including bargaining unit employees, built a department that provides unmatched care, benefits, and services to the brave men and women who served in our nation's armed forces.

"More than 79% of VA's workforce are bargaining unit employees, and we are working to cultivate strong, lasting relationships with the unions that represent the population of the department's union workers, so as to ensure world class service to Veterans," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

The following steps are being taken:

- **Re-establishing the National Partnership Council:** Before it was disbanded in 2017, the NPC was a forum for open communication between labor leaders and VA leadership. Reestablishing it will provide a critical space for our leaders to build lasting relationships with our union partners, discuss employee concerns and make collaborative decisions.
- **Restoring official time for Title 38 employees:** As of today, our doctors, nurses, physician assistants and other Title 38 employees can once again use work hours to conduct union business and advocate on behalf of coworkers.
- **Continuing to deliver on President Biden's promise to protect the federal workforce:** On just his second day in office, President Biden issued an [Executive Order](#) to empower and protect career civil servants. We are working tirelessly with our unions to fully implement that order across VA.
- **Addressing many pending grievances and civil suits filed by AFGE, NAGE, NFFE and NNU:** We worked with our unions to address their concerns in a number of pending disputes, allowing VA and our unions to refocus ahead to our future on what matters most — protecting our workers and serving our Vets.

A unionized VA workforce results in a strong overall VA labor operation.

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