

September 14, 2016

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the managers and supervisors currently serving our nation in the federal government and whose interests are represented by the Federal Managers Association (FMA), I write to urge you to oppose the VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016 (H.R. 5620).

FMA has a rich history of supporting our nation's veterans and advocating legislation to enhance the services provided to the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our country. Further, we strongly support accountability and addressing misconduct at every level. As managers, we have an obligation to ensure that we are terminating employees for unacceptable conduct or for performance reasons that cannot be corrected in any other way, following due process.

Regrettably, H.R. 5620 would arbitrarily erode due process for all employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) – including the more than 100,000 employees who are veterans themselves – and set an appalling precedent for the rest of the federal workforce, which remains the largest employer of military veterans. While the current system is not perfect, statute only requires a 30 day minimum notice period from the date the proposal to remove or demote is issued to the employee to the effective date of action. That is not an unreasonable period of time to decide whether or not to terminate an individual's employment.

Since the 1880s, the United States has purposefully taken steps to eschew the spoils system and develop a judicious and impartial approach to how all government employees should be treated. Civil servants have constitutionally-guaranteed protections, including reasonable due process. If the federal civil service is to be the model employer it aims to be, Congress must not infringe on these rights. I respectfully ask you to oppose H.R. 5620 and work to craft meaningful reform and solutions at the VA. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact FMA's Government Affairs Director Greg Stanford at gstanford@fedmanagers.org or (703) 683-8700.

Sincerely,



Renee Johnson
National President