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May 9, 2023

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20571

Dear Secretary McDonough:

I was disappointed to see the Department's April 21, 2023, news release titled "Budget Cut Proposals Would Hurt Veterans." It lists several services for veterans that the "proposed 22 percent cut to VA" would cause.

Chairwoman Granger and I have committed to fully funding our veterans this fiscal year, within topline spending levels, on multiple occasions.

In fact, we discussed this when you testified on the Department's fiscal year 2024 budget request on March 29, 2023. I said in my opening statement that "Congress has always prioritized veterans and will continue to do so. I anticipate we will fully fund veterans' healthcare and other programs in FY24."

Chairwoman Granger has repeatedly stated that the Committee will find ways to reduce spending without affecting our national defense, our commitment to veterans, securing our border, or the services Americans depend on. I know she will keep her word.

I was especially concerned to see that the release was intended to influence the congressional process and negotiations between Congress and the Executive Branch, which is a violation of Section 715 of Division E of Public Law 117-328. This provision specifically prohibits the use of taxpayer dollars for partisan political activities. Appropriated funds are not to be used by the executive branch for partisan publicity purposes to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress.

I respect that there are a variety of opinions about the nation's fiscal situation, how to manage it, and the Limit, Save, and Grow Act of 2023. However, the Department does not play a role in that inherently political debate. I strongly urge you to remove the news release from the website and refrain from engaging in future political debates.

Sincerely,

John R. Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans
Affairs, and Related Agencies