

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 25, 2024

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On December 13, 2023, we sent you a letter demanding that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hold Ms. Shekeba Morrad, an attorney in the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC), accountable for an openly antisemitic and disrespectful video she posted on Instagram mocking Israelis pleading for the return of Israeli hostages being held in Gaza.

In your response on January 12, 2024, you expressed how disgusting you found Ms. Morrad's statements. You also mentioned that following VA's investigation, Ms. Morrad was counseled and required to complete harassment training as a solution for her actions.

We are incredulous that you believe this is an adequate response. The statements made by Ms. Morrad are abhorrent and insensitive, and we agree with you that they do not align with VA's core values. This decision by the Department raises questions about how Jewish veterans can trust Ms. Morrad, or VA as a whole, when seeking treatment, filing for disability claims, or any other veterans' benefits and services they are entitled to receive. To believe a veteran could or has faced this level of discrimination and hate at an agency that is meant to serve them is appalling. We question what level of hate speech is "enough" for the Department to do anything beyond "counseling."

These same issues of bias and discrimination were recently raised by the Jewish War Veterans of United States of America (JWV) in their letter to you on January 14, 2024 (enclosure), where they responded with anger and disappointment at how the Biden administration chose to address Ms. Morrad's actions. Like us, they are extremely concerned about the ability of Ms. Morrad to adequately represent the Department and interact with those veterans of the Jewish faith or heritage. Further, JWV is not satisfied that the counseling and training, that Ms. Morrad more than likely has already taken during her onboarding process as a VA employee, is going to address the issue.

After weeks of internal investigations, we are disheartened, but not surprised by the Department's attempt to shield its meager response to Ms. Morrad's comments from public scrutiny. It was no accident that we received the Department's response late on a Friday evening headed into a three-day holiday weekend. The Department's response to our letter also coincided

with public statements to media outlets. However, to our knowledge, the Department has yet to respond to JWV's letter on this topic from November 28, 2023, but rather sent the largest veteran service organization that represents our nation's Jewish veteran community a recycled press statement from two days earlier on January 15, 2024. We are also disappointed that this response was sent to Congress and the media after sundown on Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, when many members of the Jewish faith are unable to respond to inquiries due to the observance of shabbat.

In addition, your response failed to acknowledge our request for a speedy investigation of Ms. Morrad and the provision of all documents associated with the fact-finding and recommendations. As the Department has already determined the appropriate response to Ms. Morrad's actions, we would presume these documents are readily available. As such, please provide to us no later than **February 8, 2024**, any documents, evidence, and witness transcripts related to the internal investigation of Ms. Morrad's actions. Please include any charging documents, evidence, and written decisions of the proposing and deciding official related to discipline that was considered under this case. When producing documents, do not alter them in any way, including but not limited to, the application of redactions or a watermark. Additionally, digital copies should be provided in a format that enables their printing and copying. In addition, please provide an action plan that lays out how OGC plans to address Ms. Morrad's perceived biases beyond having a supervisor review her work.

Please have your staff contact Sam Kaardal, professional staff member for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, at [sam.kaardal@mail.house.gov](mailto:sam.kaardal@mail.house.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



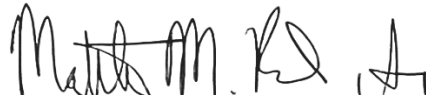
**MIKE BOST**  
Chairman  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



**ELISE STEFANIK**  
Chairwoman  
House Republican Conference



**JACK BERGMAN**  
Member of Congress



**MATTHEW M. ROSENDALE, SR.**  
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**BILL POSEY**  
Member of Congress



**JOHN ROSE**  
Member of Congress



**NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS**  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee