January 24, 2022

The Honorable David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Dear Mr. Ferriero,

We write on behalf of our constituents and veterans across the nation who are being severely impacted by the unacceptable delay in responding to requests for assistance by the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), an agency of the National Archives and Records Administration. In your October 2021 letter to Congressional leadership, you restated your commitment to eliminating the backlog, restoring the NPRC’s pre-pandemic response times, and re-instating on-site staffing reduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, on January 10, 2022, NARA officials communicated that the NPRC has reverted to a 25% in-person staff, leaving even more veterans in the same position they were almost two years ago. We ask that you immediately bring NPRC back to full capacity and inform Members of Congress on your plans to operate in a timely manner.

The NPRC is responsible for an array of veteran services. For some veterans, there may not be an alternative service for accessing military records required by various federal and civilian agencies. Additionally, veterans and their families often request replacements for military service medals when they bury a loved one, find that the medal has become tarnished or when the medal is destroyed or lost. Normally, this simple request is filled within a reasonable timeframe. Now, veterans may wait up to 18 months. Also, veterans have reported difficulty in receiving documents needed to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care or disability compensation. Despite a declaration on the NPRC’s website that emergency requests associated with medical treatments will be processed, hundreds of thousands of veterans report waiting for the records needed to access medical care for health issues. As the NPRC continues to cite health precautions for not being fully staffed, our veterans suffer from health issues that need immediate attention.

The most glaring discrepancy is the neglect of the NPRC in processing critical request for copies of DD-214 forms. The NPRC’s website declares that 45% staffing would enable it to resume service on routine requests for DD-214s, yet many veterans remain unable to access this form.
DD-214s are essential for a myriad of critical services. For example, some veterans have been unable to obtain the VA home loans due to long delays in receiving DD-214s. More significantly, veterans have been denied their appropriate retirement pay levels due to not being able to demonstrate their military service for federal retirement consideration. We all know that our veterans put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. While the NPRC employees have yet to miss a paycheck, the veterans they serve have been denied access to documents that have a significant impact on their financial livelihood.

In your October 2021 letter, you stated that your goal for November was to reach approximately 75% of on-site personnel through skeleton schedules. The NPRC is back tracking once again on this promise by decreasing in-person staff. At the very least, the NPRC should be at 100% of its former capacity if it is to effectively do its job and adequately serve those who have served us. We request that you report on your plan to re-open the NPRC to full capacity and remediate its backlog in a briefing open to all Members of the House of Representatives. Please make arrangements to schedule this briefing no later than February 7, 2022. To schedule the briefing, please contact Rep. Fred Keller’s staff at Kevin.okeefe@mail.house.gov (202-225-3731), Rep. Cliff Bentz’s staff at Abigail.michos@mail.house.gov (202-225-5774), or Ranking Member Mike Bost’s staff at Katherine.smith@mail.house.gov (202-225-3527).

Sincerely,

Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress

Fred Keller
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Brian Mast
Member of Congress
Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress

Kat Cammack  
Member of Congress

Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress

Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress

Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress

Michelle Steel  
Member of Congress

Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress

Ted Budd  
Member of Congress

Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress

Barry Moore  
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress

Tom McClintock  
Member of Congress
Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress

Doug Lamont
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Robert Aderholt
Member of Congress

Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis
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W. Gregory Steube
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Dan Meuser
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Matt Gaetz
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Ralph Norman
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Pete Stauber
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Randy K. Weber
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Beth Van Duyne
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Barry Loudermilk
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Tim Walberg
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Tim Burchett
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Randy Feenstra
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Michael Waltz
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Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress

Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress

Eric A. “Rick” Crawford  
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Chuck Fleischmann  
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Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs  
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Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

John H. Rutherford  
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Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress

Andy Harris, M.D.  
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Troy E. Nehls  
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress

Dusty Johnson  
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Victoria Spartz  
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Mike Johnson  
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Peter Meijer  
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Bill Posey  
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Debbie Lesko  
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John Moolenaar  
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Claudia Tenney  
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Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.  
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Tom Rice  
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Mike Kelly  
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions  
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Alex X. Mooney  
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Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Van Taylor  
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Lee Zeldin  
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Jodey C. Arrington  
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Chip Roy  
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Russ Fulcher  
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Clay Higgins  
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Vern Buchanan  
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Roger Williams  
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Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress

Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress
Scott Franklin
Member of Congress

Tom Emmer
Member of Congress

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Sam Graves
Member of Congress

Jim Baird
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Warren Davidson
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Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

Jason Smith
Member of Congress

John Katko
Member of Congress

Young Kim
Member of Congress

James Comer
Member of Congress