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## U.S. House of Representatives

### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

B-234 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

August 28, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie  
 Secretary  
 Department of Veterans Affairs  
 810 Vermont Ave, NW  
 Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We would like to bring to your attention some important gaps within the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) public website, [VA.gov](http://VA.gov). We believe VA should undertake specific changes to provide improved access to information for veterans and ensure full compliance with the laws and rules pertaining to federal websites.

As you know, VA's website is a vital resource for veterans and their families. Many Veterans Service Organizations, stakeholder groups, and others consider the website a critical source for a wide range of information. However, a review by the Committee staff found that VA's primary public website, [VA.gov](http://VA.gov), does not conform to multiple federal requirements, including mandatory content and links. Further, while the [eBenefits](http://eBenefits.gov) site may not be the VA's primary homepage, it is a commonly accessed landing page for veterans and their family members looking to understand their benefits.

Specifically, the Committee staff review noted:

- [Freedom of Information Act](http://Freedom of Information Act) (FOIA). The information and links regarding VA's FOIA office and process is on neither VA.gov or eBenefits.gov (DOD FOIA is included as part of eBenefits).<sup>1</sup>
- [Office of Inspector General](http://Office of Inspector General). The eBenefits site maintained by VA does not have the required link to the VA [Office of Inspector General](http://Office of Inspector General).<sup>2</sup> While eBenefits links to the DOD OIG, this is a separate institution.
- [USA.gov](http://USA.gov).<sup>3</sup> The USA.gov link is not on VA.gov, although it is on eBenefits.

<sup>1</sup> Required by [OMB M-05-04](http://OMB M-05-04), *Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites*.

<sup>2</sup> Required by the [Inspector General Act of 1978 \(amended\)](http://Inspector General Act of 1978 (amended))

<sup>3</sup> Required by [OMB M-05-04](http://OMB M-05-04), *Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites*.

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The inclusion of these links on VA's websites is required. Equally important, these are resources that should make VA more accessible in order to promote accountability. For example, the Freedom of Information Act represents policies and procedures granting critical access to federal agency records by all Americans. Similarly, the OIG performs oversight of VA, representing critical accountability and reporting of fraud, waste, and abuse. Finally, USA.gov site provides links to many government services and information for federal programs.

Thank you for your attention to these issues with the VA websites. We understand that VA's website continues to evolve, including a major redesign last year. However, we ask that you ensure that the website has all the required information in order to be as useful as possible for our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,



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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Max Rose  
Member of Congress



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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress