

ALOHA



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
PROFESSIONAL and
TECHNICAL ENGINEERS

STATE OF HAWAII & PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS:
LOCAL 121, P.O. BOX 786, AIEA, HAWAII 96701
PHONE: (808) 474-4218, FAX: (808) 471-5464

March 17, 2017

Representative Tulsi Gabbard
United States House
1433 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Fax: (202) 225-4987

Subject: Concerning Your Vote on HR 1259 - VA Accountability 1st Act (House Roll Call 168)

Dear Representative Gabbard,

As the President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 121, representing more than 3,000 civilian workers employed in Hawaii including Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & IMF (PHNSY & IMF), Naval Facilities Pacific, Naval Facilities Hawaii, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA formerly known as JPAC), and Defense Logistics Agency at Pearl, **I am writing to let you know of our disappointment in your vote last night in support of HR 1259**, a bill that can only be described as an onslaught on the worker's rights for federal workers at the VA.

You supported this bill, despite the fact that the AFL-CIO, AFGE and many other unions representing workers at the VA weighed-in in strong opposition. As you can see from the attached AFL-CIO letter, this bill is, "a thinly veiled effort to destroy union rights..." Even yesterday's "Daily Dem Whip" notice <http://www.democraticwhip.gov/content/daily-whip-thursday-march-16-2017-0> urged members to VOTE NO on the bill, calling it a, "partisan attack on the federal workforce..."

As you should be aware, the problems highlighted last year with a few VA locations were not the fault of rank and file workers. Rather those were management initiated. Instead of truly trying to improve the VA - which for the most part is a great agency supported by the overwhelming majority of Veterans - the Republican House majority has turned this into an opportunity to not improve the VA, but instead to attack their favorite targets: Unions and federal workers. IFPTE Local 121 is at a loss as to how you could support such an anti-worker piece of legislation.

IFPTE does not have any members at the VA, so our International did not do a letter on this. However, given that we lost ten Democrats on this bill, including you, we will not take for granted anymore that such an awful bill, and upcoming bills like HR-1293, HR-1364, and HR-1461, would be enough for lawmakers to vote right on them. If workers at the VA can see their rights stripped to what is called for in HR 1259, then so can workers at agencies where IFPTE Local 121 represents federal workers.

Sincerely,

Jamie M. Hiranaka,
President, IFPTE Local 121

Attachment

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

March 15, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to reject the VA Accountability First Act (H.R. 1259), introduced by Chairman David Roe. H.R. 1259 is a thinly veiled effort to destroy union rights and shift the blame for management failures at the VA onto the backs of front line employees.

The bill severely truncates the appeals process in current law and destroys grievance procedures that have been successfully used throughout the federal government to provide stability and protection against arbitrary treatment, and with it any guarantee that employees will feel safe speaking out against mismanagement or to protect patient safety.

Rather than building a culture of trust at the VA, H.R. 1259 would turn back the clock to an era when employees could be fired with the slightest justification and almost no opportunity to mount an effective defense. Worse, the bill would single out VA employees for harsher treatment than other federal workers, including the recoupment of compensation already earned without adequate due process, including pension benefits, and relocation and performance bonuses.

The Roe bill reflects the Chairman's opposition to collective bargaining and the crucial role labor organizations play in giving federal workers a voice on the job. For the 120,000 veterans who work at the VA, this bill is not only a slap in the face but a betrayal of the promise that they would be guaranteed fair treatment if they came to work for the federal government.

We urge you to reject H.R. 1259.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department

WS/BC/lkr

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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