

Washington D.C. – Congressman Kevin McCarthy today issued the following statement on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) releasing [two audits](#) he requested on the benefits and services provided to veterans nationwide and in our local region by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In response to the reports, Congressman McCarthy and Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller today sent two letters to Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki urging the VA take immediate action to implement GAO's recommendations and report back to Congress on that progress. In addition, the Veterans Affairs Committee is scheduled to hold two hearings in February to hear directly from GAO on its audits and the VA's plan to address these reports.

Joining Congressman McCarthy in reviewing the audit's findings is Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee Jeff Miller.

Congressman Kevin McCarthy issued the following statement:

"Today's GAO audits only further confirm our veterans' concerns that the VA is taking too long to resolve their disability claims and schedule their medical appointments. Now is the time for the VA to act, which is why Chairman Miller and I have urged Secretary Shinseki take immediate action to implement GAO's recommendations to reduce back logs, increase claims processing times, and ensure our nation's veterans receive the care they deserve in a timely manner. In the oversight hearings the Veterans Affairs Committee has scheduled on these audits, I intend to continue to pressure the VA to address our veterans concerns and how they plan to quickly implement reforms. In the Los Angeles VA Regional Office alone, which serves many veterans in our congressional district, 80% of disability claims are backlogged and it can take years to resolve outstanding cases. This is unacceptable. The men and women who risked all to defend American values at home and abroad deserve better than this. If VA does not take immediate and substantive steps to address these problems, the House will."

Chairman Jeff Miller issued the following statement:

"I am concerned that the backlog of disability claims continues to grow. One of my top priorities is to curb the growth of the backlog and make substantial strides towards reducing it. While VA says it is improving its claims processing, the numbers and wait times tell a different story. This report shows that there is a disconnect between VA's promises on turning the corner on the claims backlog and reality. Now is the time for results. Disabled veterans have waited far too long for the system to begin working for them, and I intend to hold VA leadership accountable

for making the changes GAO recommends. The Committee stands ready to work with VA to finally fix this problem.”

Background:

- After receiving complaints from local veterans on the amount of time it takes the VA to process veterans' disability claims and schedule medical appointments, Congressman McCarthy led his colleagues in requesting that GAO conduct an audit of the VA to ensure our veterans get the benefits and medical services they are entitled to in a timely manner.
- The GAO audits found various administrative problems, such as failure to implement VA claims processing and appointment scheduling policies consistently across regions.
- The timeliness of VA compensation rating claims and appeals processing has worsened in recent years. In fact, the Los Angeles VA Regional Office has a total of 25,322 claims with 80% pending 125 days or later.
- The VA has generally concurred with the audits and now must develop a plan to implement GAO's recommendations to reduce claims backlogs, scheduling wait times and ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve in a timely manner.