Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420

September 17, 2026

Secretary Collins:

We write to express our concern regarding the apparent lack of support for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (ACWV). According to the ACWV Charter, which you signed October 6, 2025,[1] this Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) must meet twice annually and submit a report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs annually on July 1st. However, according to the files assembled and maintained by VA's Advisory Committee Management Office in accordance with the law, the committee has not met since December 2024. No report has been published for either 2025 or 2026.

Additionally, we understand that the most recent Chair of the ACWV, Colonel (Ret.) Wanda A. Wright, resigned from that position in April 2026 in protest of VA having "effectively rendered the Committee inactive" and affirming the digital record of inactivity referenced above by noting the ACWV has not met since December 2024.

Under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), it is a requirement that advisory committees meet regularly, conduct business transparently, and actively fulfill their statutory purpose.[2] Specifically, the ACWV is mandated by statute, 38 U.S.C. § 542, which *requires* that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs establish an advisory committee consisting of members from the general public who represent women veterans, veterans with service-connected disabilities, and those recently separated from the military and/or are recognized authorities in fields including gender-specific health-care needs of women.[3] The law also *requires* you to consult with and seek advice from the ACWV with respect to VA health care, benefits, outreach, and other programs administered by VA. The committee, by statute, is to submit a report to you which you are required to submit to Congress within 60 days of receipt. We did not receive a report in 2025 and have seen no evidence that we should expect one in 2026.

The lapse in the ACWV's required activities raises concerns about whether the Department is fulfilling its statutory obligation to consult with and seek the committee's advice on matters affecting women veterans. The limited information available regarding the committee's status further raises questions about whether VA is meeting its obligations under law and providing Congress and the public with adequate transparency regarding the operation of a Congressionally mandated advisory body.

---

[1] https://department.va.gov/advisory-committee-management/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/12/2025-Women-Veterans-Charter.pdf.

[2] 5 U.S.C. § 10.

[3] 38 U.S.C. § 542.

To better understand the Department's practices related to this FAC, we request responses to the following questions no later than October 2, 2026:

1. How many times did the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans meet in 2025?

2. As of the date of your response, how many times has the ACWV met in 2026?

3. What is informing your decisions about how to optimally provide care, benefits, and services to women veterans in the absence of regular meetings of the ACWV?

4. Each FAC has an associated budget and employees. Given that ACWV has not met as required in 2025 and 2026, have the budget and employees been redirected and if so how are they being used? Please provide funding levels used to support FAC activities in FY2025 and FY2026 and descriptions of how the funding was used.

5. What is your plan to ensure that meetings of the ACWV occur according to its statue and charter?

We appreciate your prompt attention to these questions and expect a timely and complete response. Congress created these advisory committees to ensure that the voices, expertise, and experiences of veterans inform the Department charged with serving them. Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors deserve nothing less than a clear accounting of why the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans has been allowed to fall silent and what the Department will do to restore these critical perspectives to the table.

Sincerely,

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

George Latimer
Member of Congress

Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress

Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress