Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
United States Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

It has come to our recent attention from county Veterans Service Officers (VSO) within Ohio, that the current processing time for disability claims appeals is between five to ten years at the Cleveland, Ohio Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO).

Not only are countless veterans forced to wait an excessive amount of time to receive a decision on their initial disability claims, they are now forced to wait years for an appeals decision. For many veterans and their families, this wait time can be a lifetime and places them under further hardships.

As you do, we care a great deal for our nation's veterans, and want to ensure that they are properly taken care of and their needs are addressed in a timely and efficient manner. That is why it is imperative that the VA ensure the appeals backlog and processing times in Cleveland and throughout the country is drastically reduced, while continuing to work towards the goal of eliminating the initial claims backlog by 2015 and process all claims within 125 days with 98 percent accuracy.

We respectfully request that you please provide us reasons for this current backlog, the corrective actions the VA and Cleveland VARO plan to take to remedy this situation, and possible ways Congress may be helpful. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

David Joyce
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

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