

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1601

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND
RISK MANAGEMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CONSERVATION, ENERGY, AND FORESTRY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, AND POULTRY
BUDGET COMMITTEE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

August 23, 2012

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

I am writing to request information regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs Human Resources conferences held in Orlando during July and August of 2011.

Specifically, I am requesting the following information:

1. A list of all conferences held by the Department of Veterans Affairs during 2011.
2. A list of all the attendees at the VA Human Resources Conference in Orlando, Florida, held July 11-15, 2011.
3. A list of all the attendees at the VA Human Resources Conference in Orlando, Florida, held August 8-12, 2011.
4. A list of all the individuals involved in planning and approving the July 2011 and August 2011 Human Resources conferences.

I had my staff request this information through the VA Congressional and Legislative Affairs office on August 14, but due to the very serious and urgent nature of this issue, I am submitting this formal request directly to you, as well. I know you share my desire to serve our veterans and protect our taxpayers, and I appreciate your immediate attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving this information without delay. You may contact Annie Boyajian in my office at (202) 225-2715 or annie.boyajian@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress

TIM HUELSKAMP
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

E-MAIL VIA WEBSITE:
<http://huelskamp.house.gov/>

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September 18, 2012

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

I am writing to request information regarding the 2011 National Veterans Golden Age Games in Hawaii. While I understand the great importance of providing rehabilitative services for our veterans, I am troubled by the apparently lavish expenditures at the Hawaii games.

In order to provide some clarity on the matter, I am requesting the following information:

1. A complete, detailed list of all expenditures for the 2011 games.
2. A complete list of all individuals from the Department of Veterans Affairs in attendance at the 2011 games, including title, pay, and their purpose for attending.
3. A complete list of all individuals from the Department of Veterans Affairs involved in planning and implementing the 2011 games, including their title and pay.
4. The exact number of veterans in attendance at the 2011 games.
5. The exact process through which Alaska Destination Specialists was selected to provide event planning services. Was this contract competitively bid? Why was an event planning service used when VA employs individuals specifically for the purpose of planning the Golden Age Games?
6. A complete list of each advance trip to Hawaii ahead of the games for scouting, planning and set up purposes.
7. A complete, detailed list of all expenditures for each advance trip.
8. A complete list of staff attending each advance trip, including their title, pay, and purpose for attending.
9. A complete list of all event planners used for other National Veterans Golden Age Games and the amount the VA paid for their services.

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HUTCHINSON
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SALINA
119 WEST IRON AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR, SUITE A
P.O. BOX 766
SALINA, KS 67402
(785) 309-0572
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As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I take very seriously Congress' responsibility to ensure that tax dollars are being used to honor and care for our veterans, and I am concerned by recent reports of wasteful spending at the VA. You have stated publicly your desire for transparency at the VA, and I hope you will provide this information without delay. Should you need additional information from my office, you may contact Annie Boyajian at (202) 225-2715 or annie.boyajian@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Huelskamp". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress

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October 3, 2012

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

I am writing to you regarding the VA Office of Inspector General's report dated September 30, 2012 and titled, "Administrative Investigation of the FY 2011 Human Resources Conferences in Orlando, Florida." I am extremely concerned by the information contained in the report and have several follow-up questions.

1. Did Mr. Sepúlveda receive a severance package or exit bonus? If so, what were the exact terms of this package or bonus? What is the date of his final paycheck and/or pay period? Did Mr. Sepúlveda receive a payout for accrued vacation time? If so, what was the total dollar amount of this payout?
2. The VA has stated that "employees who have misused taxpayer dollars or violated VA standards of conduct will be held accountable." What exactly does "held accountable" mean? Will employees be fired? Will employees be required to pay fair market value for the gifts they illegally accepted? Will employees face civil or criminal penalties?
3. Please provide the names and titles of the employees who are being held accountable and the specific details of the actions being taken against them.

As head of the second largest federal agency, you have been tasked with overseeing nearly 300,000 employees—no small assignment. This is why it is absolutely crucial that the Department of Veterans Affairs establish rigorous accountability measures and employ trustworthy staff. I know you appreciate the importance of working together with Congress to reach this goal.

In order to work together, however, it is crucial that Congress receive information from the Department of Veterans Affairs in a timely manner. In addition to my request for information about VA actions following the VAOIG report on the HR conferences, I am also including copies of two letters I have previously submitted that are still outstanding with your office. My questions regarding the VA HR conferences were originally submitted on August 14, and

questions 2-4 have not yet been answered. My questions regarding the 2011 Golden Age Games were originally submitted on September 18, and none of them have been answered.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Huelskamp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress