

LOIS FRANKEL
21ST DISTRICT, FLORIDA

WASHINGTON OFFICE

1037 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-9890

DISTRICT OFFICE

2500 NORTH MILITARY TRAIL
SUITE #490
BOCA RATON, FL 33431
(561) 998-9045
TOLL FREE (866) 264-0957

frankel.house.gov

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

Co-CHAIR
CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS
FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

STEERING AND POLICY
COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0921

December 13, 2017

The Honorable David J. Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

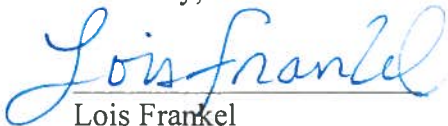
I write to thank the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and particularly Director of Appeals Management Office David McLenachen, for launching the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP), and provide a few suggestions to help make sure veterans understand the new procedure.

As you know, RAMP is aimed at providing veterans with the earliest possible resolution of their benefit appeals, and was launched on November 1 as a pilot for 500 veterans with pending appeals. These veterans received a RAMP notice letter informing them about the new system. The following recommendations come from my Veterans Advisory Council:

- Place language encouraging veterans to speak with their Veteran Service Officer before deciding whether to participate in RAMP near the beginning of the letter;
- Adjust tone to ensure veterans understand the potential drawbacks of electing to opt-in so that veterans who may be better served by remaining in the current system are not misled;
- Add in the "Higher-Level Review Lane" section that "You or your representative will not be able to add new evidence during this process;"
- Clarify that a judge will not be reviewing appeals under RAMP;
- Specify in the "What It Means to Opt-In" section that multiple review tracks exist;
- Clarify in the "RAMP Opt-In Election" form that veterans do not need to return the form to remain in the current appeals process; and
- Change withdrawal language to state: "If you wish to withdraw any or all of your current claims on appeal, please contact your representative for assistance."

Thank you for taking these suggestions into consideration as you work to improve the appeals process for all veterans. Please contact Daniel Bleiberg in my office at 202-225-9890 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

CC: Chairman Phil Roe, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Ranking Member Timothy Walz, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Chairman Johnny Isakson, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Ranking Member Jon Tester, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs