

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 5, 2017

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

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite  
Commanding General and U.S Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314

Re: James A. Haley Veterans Hospital Bed Tower Delay – Request Briefing and Timeline

Dear Secretary Shulkin and Lieutenant General Semonite:

We write to express our concern with the length of time it is taking to plan and construct the new bed tower at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida. As you are aware, the Haley VA is one of the busiest VA hospitals in the nation, serving over 90,000 veterans every year. In 2009, Congress appropriated \$231.5 million to cover multiple construction projects including a new hospital bed tower, which will include 90 medical or surgical beds, 40 intensive care unit beds as well as an expansion of patient support spaces and amenities to better serve our veterans. A modern bed tower is needed to bring the hospital, patient rooms and medical amenities up to the current “standard of care”.

We are very concerned to learn that due to process by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) that solicitation for contractors to build the bed tower was extended. We understand that the ACOE award of a contract will not occur before the end of the year, which is a significant delay from the previously scheduled date. We note that during the on-time and on-budget construction of the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center at Haley a few years ago that the ACOE was not involved in the planning and construction. We are aware of legislative changes that say that the ACOE should be involved, but they do not appear to have made the process more efficient so we must ask - why is the ACOE necessary for this or other VA projects?

It is vital that construction of the Haley VA bed tower remains on track and on budget to serve the needs of our veterans. We respectfully request a detailed response and briefing on the reasons for the delays. What is the current schedule? Who is directly responsible and accountable for this project? These are a few of the matters we would like to discuss as we are committed to doing what is best for our veterans and what is the right for taxpayers. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor  
United States Representative  
Florida - District 14



Dennis Ross  
United States Representative  
Florida - District 15