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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0911

December 10, 2012

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

RE: Veterans Administration Backlog Critical at St. Petersburg VA Regional Office – Request
Plan of Action and Timeline

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

Thank you for your leadership and service to our nation's veterans. I respectfully request that you address the egregious backlog of veteran disability claims at the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office. I understand that you are tackling the backlog on a national basis, but the untenable backlog at the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office requires immediate attention.

The St. Petersburg, VA Regional office backlog has the second highest number of outstanding claims in the country. As of November 24th there were 46,929 pending claims in the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office. The processing time also is longer than the national average. This is unacceptable. The backlog is delaying benefits that veterans earned. Such long waiting times are a disservice to veterans and their families.

I respectfully request an immediate plan of action to reduce the St. Petersburg VA backlog and a briefing on the goals and the timeline that the Department of Veterans Affairs has chosen to approach the task of resolving the matter.

I will continue to work for our veterans and coordinate with the local VA office, but that is not enough. We need action now to eliminate the backlog. Thank you in advance for your

prompt review and response. Please feel free to contact me or my legislative assistant, Kevin Karpay, at (202) 225-3376.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Castor".

Kathy Castor
U.S. Representative
Florida – District 11

CC: Representative Jeff Miller
Representative Mike Michaud