

VFW Expresses Concern Over Erroneous VA Bonuses

VA senior executives awarded monies instead of field staff it was earmarked for

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WASHINGTON — In light of the recent Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General report of funding improperly paid to senior executives last year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is expressing its concerns over the payments.

“We are very disappointed by the lack of oversight involved here,” said Mike Figlioli, VFW Director of National Veterans Service. “Knowing that this funding was intended to retain those in the department with critical skills to take care of veterans or provide them with their much-needed benefits, it is concerning such funding would be paid as an incentive, even if it was just a handful of individuals. That is unacceptable to the VFW and those of us who have advocated so diligently on their behalf.”

In the report, OIG found that senior executive staff assigned to the VA Central Office were awarded these monies instead of the field staff it was earmarked for. These “bonuses,” were part of the funding for a retention program used to retain critical talent. The program, which is submitted in a list yearly to Congress, has been used in fields of critical skills shortages, such as nurses, phlebotomists, police, and sanitation and food service workers to name a few.

“This is poor stewardship of the funding the VFW has fought hard for,” said Figlioli. “While we are disappointed such action occurred, we are heartened that once Secretary McDonough discovered the issue, he stopped payments and requested the IG to investigate. With that in mind, we expect the secretary to follow through on his commitment to make this right.

“Our veterans deserve nothing but the utmost care and service from VA as well as accountability at every level.” said Figlioli.

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