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April 9, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Acting Director Michael Rigas
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Secretary Wilkie and Acting Director Rigas,

I write today concerning impending staff shortages in the custodial and housekeeping fields at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Denver, Colorado.

As a result of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and to ensure compliance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center has a higher demand for custodial and housekeeping staff and a critical need to hire rapidly. However, due to 5 CFR 330.401, they are required to give preference to veterans and other specified groups for any custodial and housekeeping positions. While I applaud this important rule, the pandemic requires we meet new demands in a timely way to potentially include temporary Direct Hire Authority Waivers. The current requirements are exacerbating the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ability to meet immediate needs.

I ask that the VA address the urgent need for custodial and housekeeping staff and allow the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center to meet the demand for an urgently-needed workforce by allowing access into a greater pool of applicants more quickly.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator