Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Director Kiran Ahuja
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E St, NW
Washington, DC 20415

The Honorable David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States
700 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20408

Dear President Biden, Director Ahuja, and Mr. Ferriero:

We are writing regarding the growing backlog of veteran record requests at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). We urge you to expeditiously develop a plan to boost capacity at the NPRC and reduce this backlog by any means possible.

We were recently informed that the NPRC is now operating at 10 percent capacity. This level is down from approximately 20 to 25 percent capacity during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. As a result, the NPRC has a backlog of more than half a million records requests – predominantly for DD-214 forms – that have been unfulfilled.

As you are aware, a DD-214 form is a veteran's primary document used to prove his or her service in the United States military. It is required to obtain an identification card needed to receive veteran benefits like health and dental care, access preferential hiring for federal jobs, shop and receive services at military bases, and more. Without this verification, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for veterans to access the benefits they have earned through hard work and sacrifice to our country.

In December of last year, Congress gave the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) $50 million in emergency appropriations for the NARA revolving fund. Despite receiving $15 million of this funding, the NPRC has since seen a drop in staffing levels and processing capacity.

Veterans are our nation's heroes. They deserve gold-standard access to care and benefits. We urgently ask you to take any and all actions to address this growing crisis so that our heroes are not left behind in this already difficult time.

Additionally, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. During the height of the COVID-19 crisis last year, when virus deaths were hitting new highs daily, the NPRC was operating at 20-25 percent capacity. Why is it now, when vaccines are widely available, that the center is only operating at 10 percent capacity?

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2. During the last update on the backlog, NARA Chief Archivist Ferriero stated that more than 100 new staff were being brought on at the NPRC to increase staffing to higher than pre-pandemic levels. Has the staff been hired or is the process still ongoing?
3. How many DD-214 forms are being processed and delivered per day at the current staffing levels?
4. Our understanding is the NPRC is currently only working on DD-214 requests and other emergency requests. When does the NPRC plan to integrate requests such as those for medical records, full military records, medals for deceased veterans, and others back into the workflow?
5. How did the NPRC use the $15 million in funding given to reduce the records request backlog?
6. What metrics are the Office of Personnel Management using to determine capacity levels at the NPRC? When does the NPRC expect to return to full capacity? What are the continuing barriers to doing so?

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross

Member of Congress

Warren Davidson

Member of Congress