



# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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July 26, 2012

The Honorable Eric Shinseki  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420  
Fax: 202-495-5463

RE: Retaliation against Dr. Michelle Washington, Wilmington VAMC Psychologist and  
Witness at November 30, 2011 Senate VA Committee Hearing


Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I am writing to request that you take immediate action to halt management's retaliatory actions against Dr. Michelle Washington in connection with her testimony before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. At that hearing, Chairman Patty Murray and several members of the Committee admonished the Department for taking retaliatory actions against Dr. Washington, including denial of her request for administrative leave to attend the hearing and lowering her performance rating from Outstanding to Unsatisfactory. A month after the hearing, further retaliation occurred, specifically, management changed Dr. Washington's title and removed core duties she had been performing as the facility's Coordinator of PTSD Services and Evidence-Based Psychotherapy.

This type of retaliation is highly illegal, extremely disrespectful of the Congressional hearing process, and threatening to the VA's ability to identify deficiencies in services it provides to veterans. For eight months, Dr. Washington has been under attack for speaking the truth about the unmet needs of veterans facing severe mental health problems. As the Administration's highest level appointee over our veterans' health care system, AFGE is calling upon you to take prompt action to fix this situation and to make Dr. Washington whole in terms of her job duties, job title, and performance ratings.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,



J. David Cox, Sr.  
National Secretary-Treasurer

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Alma Lee, President, AFGE National VA Council

