

HOPE DAVIS

((STANDUP))

THE WHITE HOUSE'S NEW DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY, OR DOGE, HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF RECENT CONTROVERSY FOLLOWING ITS INITIATIVE TO RAPIDLY DECREASE THE SIZE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST WORRISOME CUTS HAS TARGETED SOME OF AMERICA'S MOST VULNERABLE: VETERANS.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PLAN TO SCALE BACK THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INCLUDES REPORTS OF CUTTING MORE THAN 80,000 FEDERAL WORKERS AT THE VA, HOPING TO RETURN THE WORKFORCE TO IT'S 2019 LEVEL OF UNDER 400,000 EMPLOYEES.

A SHOCKING GOAL, AS THE 2019 NATIONAL SUICIDE DATA REPORT RELEASED BY THE VA STATES THAT AROUND 17 VETERAN SUICIDES OCCURED EACH DAY THAT YEAR.

PROGRAMS LIKE THE COUNTRY'S VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE ARE RAPIDLY LOSING EMPLOYEES TO LAYOFFS, LEAVING VETERANS WITH LONGER WAIT TIMES OR NO ACCESS TO HELP AT ALL.

THESE CUTS POSE A PROBLEMATIC SITUATION FOR VETERANS AND THEIR LOVED ONES... LIKE ME.

MY BROTHER SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS FROM 2011 TO 2015, AND CAME BACK SUFFERING FROM SEVERE PTSD FOLLOWING HIS DEPLOYMENT IN AFGHANISTAN.

THE VA BECAME NOT ONLY HIS, BUT OUR LIFELINE AS WELL.

FOUR MONTHS AFTER HIS DISCHARGE, HE EXPERIENCED A CRISIS AND NEEDED IMMEDIATE INPATIENT TREATMENT, AND WAS TOLD HE HAD TO WAIT THREE MONTHS BEFORE THERE WAS EVEN SPACE FOR HIM.

FOR A VETERAN IN CRISIS, THREE MONTHS CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE OR DEATH.

WHITE HOUSE SPOKESPERSON ANNA KELLY HAS STATED THAT "PRESIDENT TRUMP REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE VA BUREAUCRACY AND BLOAT THAT HAS HINDERED VETERANS ABILITY TO RECEIVE TIMELY AND QUALITY CARE."

MEANWHILE IN 2024, THE VA REACHED ITS HIGHEST EVER SERVICE LEVELS, REACHING OVER 9 MILLION ENROLLEES AND DELIVERING MORE THAN 127 MILLION HEALTH CARE APPOINTMENTS.

WHEN VETERANS HAVE SPOKEN OUT, VIRAL VIDEOS HAVE SHOWN THEM BEING DRAGGED OUT OF TOWN HALL MEETINGS.

ONE VIDEO IN PARTICULAR SHOWS JAY CAREY, A DISABLED VETERAN, BEING ESCORTED OUT OF A MEETING IN ASHEVILLE WHEN HE VOICED HIS FRUSTRATIONS.

SOT: JAY CAREY AT TOWN HALL

TRT: 7:07 SEC

OUT- DON'T GET TO DO THIS TO US

“YOU DON'T GET TO TAKE AWAY OUR RIGHTS, YOU DON'T GET TO TAKE AWAY OUR HEALTHCARE, GET OFF OF ME, YOU DON'T GET TO DO THIS TO US!”

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IN INTERVIEWS AFTER THE VIDEO, CAREY SAID THE FOLLOWING:

“I SPENT OVER 20 YEARS FIGHTING FOR THIS COUNTRY. I EARNED THOSE BENEFITS AS WELL AS MY FELLOW VETERANS — I WATCHED MY FRIENDS DIE IN WAR, I BLED FOR MY COUNTRY.”

THE TERMINATION OF THE “BUREAUCRACY AND BLOAT” OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH FOR MILLIONS.

WE CANNOT CALL OURSELVES THE ‘LAND OF THE FREE AND HOME OF THE BRAVE’ IF WE SILENCE OUR VETERANS AND ALLOW THEM TO BE DEFINED AS GOVERNMENT WASTE.