

# UTILITY WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

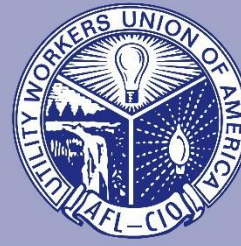
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The Honorable Dave McCormick  
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## **Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding Federal Budget Shortfalls and Their Broad Impact on Pennsylvania Veterans – Vote NO on President Trump's H.R. 1**

Dear Senator McCormick,

I am writing to you today as a constituent from Pennsylvania, a fellow veteran, and as the Region 2 Representative and Legislative Chair for the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) Veterans Committee, to convey our committees' profound concerns regarding the current state of federal funding and its far-reaching consequences for those who have served our nation. Your dedicated service to our state is appreciated.

As we are sure you are aware, current estimates place Pennsylvania's veteran population at over **700,000 individuals**. Many of these brave men and women depend not only on the VA system for their healthcare and essential services but also on other critical federal programs. Ensuring their continued access to high-quality care and earned benefits is a foundational obligation. Our state's VA healthcare infrastructure, primarily under the VA Healthcare System of Pennsylvania (VISN 4), includes major medical centers in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Wilkes-Barre, Lebanon, and Erie, complemented by a widespread network of Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and Vet Centers.

Our deepest concern stems from the **significant national impacts that past and ongoing federal budget shortfalls are already having** on our veterans across the country, particularly within Pennsylvania. These are not merely hypothetical concerns; we are seeing tangible consequences unfold:

- **Critical VA Staffing Issues & Reduced Access to Care:** Across the nation, budget pressures have led to hiring freezes and a halt in recruitment for essential specialized providers, including oncologists and mental health professionals, creating staffing shortages. This directly translates into extended wait times for appointments and, in

some cases, the scaling back or cancellation of vital programs, such as cancer clinical trials and crucial suicide prevention outreach initiatives. The underfunding also exacerbates backlogs in benefit claims processing, adding undue stress and financial hardship for veterans and their families.

- **Impacts on Veterans in the Federal Workforce:** Proposals for broad federal workforce reductions disproportionately affect veterans, who constitute nearly a quarter of all federal employees (over 700,000 individuals nationwide). Such cuts can lead to job losses and jeopardize the financial stability of veteran families who have leveraged their military experience into civilian federal careers.
- **Detrimental Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and SNAP:** Beyond direct VA services, a significant number of veterans, especially those with lower incomes, disabilities, or complex health needs, rely on programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
  - **Medicare and Medicaid:** Approximately **half of all veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system are also eligible for Medicare and utilize both for their care** (Source: VA Health Systems Research, e.g., "Dual Insurance Coverage Is Common Among VA Enrollees – Publication Brief"). Many veterans, particularly those over 65 or with disabilities, depend on Medicare as their primary or supplementary health insurance. For younger veterans or those with specific income levels, Medicaid provides a crucial safety net for comprehensive care, including long-term services. Cuts to these programs would mean increased out-of-pocket costs, reduced access to non-VA care providers, and a greater burden on an already strained healthcare system in Pennsylvania.
  - **SNAP:** Studies indicate that veterans are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. Cuts to SNAP would directly reduce food assistance for thousands of Pennsylvania veterans and their families, leading to increased hunger and compounding economic hardship.

The UWUA Veterans Committee urges you to consider these grave national and local impacts as you continue your important work representing the citizens of Pennsylvania. It is imperative that Congress ensures robust and consistent funding not only for the Department of Veterans

Affairs but also for the broader social safety net programs that support our veterans' health and economic well-being. **Specifically, WE strongly urge you to vote NO on H.R. 1, as its proposed cuts would severely jeopardize these critical services for our veterans and their families.** Our commitment to our veterans must remain steadfast and uncompromised. Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your response and any action you may take to advocate for our valued veteran community.

Sincerely,

Craig Romanovich Region 2 Representative  
Legislative Chair, UWUA Veterans Committee  
U.S. Army Veteran