

FRANK R. WOLF
10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA



241 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4610
(202) 225-5136

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
July 30, 2008

13873 PARK CENTER ROAD
SUITE 130
HERNDON, VA 20171
(703) 709-5800
(800) 945-9653 (IN STATE)

110 NORTH CAMERON STREET
WINCHESTER, VA 22601
(540) 667-0990
(800) 850-3463 (IN STATE)

wolf.house.gov

The Honorable James Peake
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington DC 20405-0001

Dear Secretary Peake:

I was recently made aware of a troubling policy regarding your "Flexiplace" telework program for Department of Veterans Affairs employees. Specifically, I was notified that your current telework policy for attorneys with the Board of Veterans Appeals participating in Flexiplace requires the attorneys to complete an additional 14 "credits" (approximately 140 hours) of work than non-Flexiplace participants.

I would appreciate a report on the VA Flexiplace or other VA telework programs, and whether there are different requirements for those participating in telework compared with employees not participating in telework. If so, I would further request copies of your telework participation agreement forms and a justification regarding the appropriateness of requiring telework employees to complete additional work in exchange for telework participation.

As you may know, I have been a long-time and staunch supporter of telework or telecommuting. My legislation enacted in 2001 mandated a phased-in program to expand the number of federal employees who telework with the goal of giving every eligible federal employee this workplace option by the end of 2005. When it became clear that agencies were failing to adequately implement the 2001 law, I included provisions in both the FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007 spending bills to withhold \$5 million from agencies which failed to meet the law. Ultimately, there is no excuse for discouraging telework participation -- either by slow implementation or disincentives, such as additional work requirements.

I look forward to your prompt response to my inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff member, Thomas Culligan, at 202-225-5136 with questions or for additional information regarding my concerns.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

FRW:tc

cc: Linda Springer, Office of Personnel Management