

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 12, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

I write to strongly oppose your diversion of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources away from the sacred mission of delivering the best possible service to Veterans that receive care through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)—our Nation’s largest integrated healthcare system. I demand that you reverse your disruptive decision to force Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital to surrender parking spots to serve as a “staging area” for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

As a Hines patient myself, I have experienced the consequences of the limitations of the Hines VA Hospital parking lot, which has long lacked capacity to handle the daily volume of patients, family members and caregivers. The lack of parking has forced Veterans to miss appointments and made visiting Hines a highly stressful and unpleasant event for Veterans—an adverse customer service outcome that I have experienced myself when frantically searching for a parking spot that takes far too long to emerge on the Hines campus.

Hines should never give away valuable parking spaces to a non-VA agency. Yet, it adds injury to insult when VA surrenders resources in support of reckless, paramilitary activities that do **nothing** to enhance Veteran care—and even worse, are actively harming Veterans and U.S. servicemembers by rounding up these patriotic Americans, along with their family members, and deporting them with little or no due process out of the country they were willing to risk their lives to defend.

It is preposterous that VA would believe allowing ICE to operate on the Hines campus will not adversely impact delivery of care for Hines’ patients.

From depriving Veterans of being accompanied by family members and caregivers who reasonably fear going anywhere near ICE—given the images of an out-of-control paramilitary force that refuses to identify itself with uniforms and covers its face as it snatches Americans off the streets into unmarked vans on the basis of the perceived nationality, race and the spoken language—to the Trump administration’s dishonorable distinction of deporting Veterans at an unprecedented rate; allowing ICE to stage its civil immigration enforcement operations on Hines property is a betrayal of your duty to put the best interests of Veteran patients first.

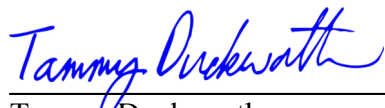
VA funds and resources should **always** be devoted to strengthening VA missions. That is especially true today, when Veteran demand for care is surging but VHA is still reeling from your mass terminations, chaotic re-hirings and overall traumatization of this dedicated civil service. You are weakening VA's ability to focus all attention and resources on its core mission: providing Veterans with the best care and patient experience possible.

It is not too late for you to abandon your pathetic capitulation to ICE.

However, if you fail to stop ICE's theft of VA resources, and you fail to protect Veterans who honorably served our Nation in uniform and have earned the right to live in the country they were willing to give their lives to defend, you will validate the Veteran community's worst suspicions about the Trump administration. You will give weight to fears that you and President Trump are engaging in a seditious scheme to sabotage VHA's ability to carry out its mission—and willing to sacrifice Veteran care—to manufacture a crisis that justifies privatizing VA.

In closing, I do not require a response to my letter. What I want is swift, decisive action to remove ICE from VA property and facilities; protect Veterans and their family members from deportation; and institute strong guardrails to prevent ICE, or any Federal agency, from bullying VA into surrendering resources and funds to non-Veteran missions.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator