



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR BENEFITS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20420

May 6, 2016

The Honorable David W. Jolly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515-0913

Dear Congressman Jolly:

I am providing a follow-up response to your November 4, 2015, letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding erroneous terminations of VA benefit awards. You requested that VA report on the number of instances of erroneous termination of benefits that have occurred over the past five years.

Although we are able to identify cases where benefits were terminated based on an erroneous notice of a beneficiary's death and subsequently reinstated, our computer systems do not collect information on the cause of the errors (e.g., VA employee error, erroneous information received through a data-matching program, incorrect identifying data provided by a third party, etc.). During calendar years 2011 through 2015, VA terminated 2,057,790 awards due to the death of the beneficiary. During the same time period, VA resumed awards for 4,201 of these beneficiaries after receiving information indicating the beneficiary was not deceased. The accuracy of award terminations due to death was 99.8 percent.

| Calendar Year | Award Terminations Due to Death | Terminated Awards Subsequently Resumed (by year of resumption) | Percent of Erroneous Terminations |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2011 | 436,932 | 987 | 0.226% |
| 2012 | 411,083 | 715 | 0.174% |
| 2013 | 414,013 | 654 | 0.158% |
| 2014 | 405,535 | 820 | 0.202% |
| 2015 | 390,227 | 1,025 | 0.263% |
| Total | 2,057,790 | 4,201 | 0.204% |

If you have any further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Angela Prudhomme, Congressional Relations Officer, at (202) 226-6471, or by email at Angela.Prudhomme@va.gov. Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

Danny G.I. Pummill
Acting