



**U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL**

1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

**The Special Counsel**

October 20, 2008

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: OSC File No. DI-08-0446

Dear Mr. President:

I received a disclosure from Mr. Varnziel Winfield, former Social Worker, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Chicago Heights Veterans Center (Veterans Center), Chicago Heights, Illinois. Mr. Winfield, who consented to the release of his name, alleged that he observed two employees watching movies for several hours almost every weekday, and another employee engaging in sexual conduct with an unidentified woman while on duty.

I required the Honorable James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to conduct an investigation into this disclosure pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c) and (d). Secretary Peake tasked the VA Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) National Office with conducting the investigation and writing the report.

As discussed in the attached Analysis of Disclosures, the agency's July 2, 2008, report confirmed that two employees regularly took one hour lunch breaks instead of the permitted 30 minute breaks, and another employee failed to appropriately document patient visits in the RCS database. The report did not substantiate the allegation that an employee engaged in sexual conduct while on duty. A September 9, 2008, supplemental report stated that the two employees involved in the time and attendance abuse received letters of counseling while the employee who failed to properly document patient visits received a written reprimand.

Mr. Winfield provided comments on the agency's reports. He questioned the first report's findings, considering the findings "grossly inaccurate." He also addressed subjects unrelated to the scope of the investigation. In his comments on the supplemental report, Mr. Winfield expressed his belief that further investigation would uncover more corruption and malfeasance.

I have reviewed the original disclosure, the original and supplemental reports, and Mr. Winfield's initial and supplemental comments. Based on that review, I have determined that the agency's reports contain all of the information required by statute and that the findings appear to be reasonable.

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As required by law, 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I have sent a copy of the reports and the whistleblower's comments to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs. I have also filed copies of the agency reports and the whistleblower's comments in our public file and closed the matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bloch', written in a cursive style.

Scott J. Bloch

Enclosures