



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA Connecticut Healthcare System
950 Campbell Avenue
West Haven CT 06516

JUL 17 2008

In Reply Refer To:

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The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of State of Connecticut
State Capital
210 Capital Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madame Secretary:

Thank you for your continuing concern about the Veterans of this nation and their ability to vote. By now I hope you have received the letter dated July 15, 2008 from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary Peake, MD.

As reflected in the letter, the VA is committed to assisting VA inpatients and residents with voter registration. On the other hand, a determination has been made that broader voter registration efforts, "drives," of outpatients, staff, visitors and the community should not occur.

At VA Connecticut, we are providing every patient on admission to inpatient or residential facilities information on how they can contact Voluntary Service, who will provide a volunteer to assist them with voter registration and absentee ballot assistance as needed. We will also be having a blitz within the next 10 days to notify all existing inpatients and residents of this assistance. We will conduct a second blitz on or about the last day of regular voter registration. Finally, on Election Day we will again canvas every inpatient and resident to determine if assistance is needed with the actual voting process.

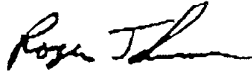
The Chief, Voluntary Service, Sharon Croteau, will be coordinating these efforts. She will be contacting your office to see if there are areas in this plan for which you or your staff would like to be involved. We are also prepared to reach out to other non-partisan voter registration groups to assist if needed, particularly on Election Day, as we assume your office will be very busy that day.

As indicated in the VA Policy, any individuals who participate in assisting inpatients and residents to vote will need to register as a VA Volunteer and review and sign the Political Activities Fact Sheet and Certification (VA Form 10-0462). If your staff would like to participate in one of the blitzes, or on an ongoing basis, they would need to register as a VA Volunteer, sign the certification, and restrict their activities to VA inpatients and residents.

As the focus of these efforts is on inpatient and residents, with the expectation that they will use absentee ballots, the demonstration of the voting machines will not be pursued at this time.

Again, we thank you for your concern about our nation's veterans and your efforts to ensure they have the right and opportunity to vote.

Sincerely,



Roger Johnson
Director, VA Connecticut Healthcare System

cc: Attorney General Richard Blumenthal