

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

ROBERT P. STORCH; MICHAEL J.
MISSAL; CHRISTI A. GRIMM; CARDELL
K. RICHARDSON, SR.; SANDRA D.
BRUCE; PHYLLIS K. FONG; LARRY D.
TURNER; HANNIBAL “MIKE” WARE;

Plaintiffs,

v.

PETE HEGSETH, *in his official capacity as
Secretary of Defense*; DOUGLAS A.
COLLINS, *in his official capacity as
Secretary of Veterans Affairs*; ROBERT F.
KENNEDY, JR., *in his official capacity as
Secretary of Health and Human Services*;
MARCO RUBIO, *in his official capacity as
Secretary of State*; DENISE L. CARTER, *in
her official capacity as Acting Secretary of
Education*; GARY WASHINGTON, *in his
official capacity as Acting Secretary of
Agriculture*; VINCENT MICONE, *in his
official capacity as Acting Secretary of Labor*;
EVERETT M. WODEL, JR., *in his official
capacity as Acting Administrator of the Small
Business Administration*; DONALD J.
TRUMP, *in his official capacity as President
of the United States*;

Defendants.

Civil Case No. 1:25-cv-00415 (ACR)

DECLARATION OF MICHAEL J. MISSAL

I, Michael J. Missal, declare as follows:

1. I was nominated as the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) by President Obama on October 2, 2015, and confirmed by unanimous consent by the Senate on April 19, 2016. I was sworn in as the Inspector General on May 2, 2016.

Based on my experience, I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth below and am competent to testify to these facts if required.

Tenure as VA Inspector General

2. The mission of the VA Office of the Inspector General (“VA OIG”) is to provide meaningful independent oversight of VA, including of the healthcare services and benefits processing. The work is extraordinarily challenging. VA operates the largest integrated healthcare system in the nation, provides over \$180 billion in disability compensation and other benefits annually, and operates 156 national cemeteries.
3. As an example of the VA OIG’s critical work, during the first Trump Administration, I received a call from the acting Under Secretary of Health informing me of mysterious deaths at the medical center in Clarksburg, West Virginia between July 2017 and June 2018. I sent a team of criminal investigators and healthcare professionals to the facility, and within 24 hours, we had identified a person of interest. The investigation ultimately resulted in a guilty plea by a nursing assistant at the facility to seven counts of second-degree murder and one count of assault with intent to commit murder. She was sentenced to seven life terms plus 20 years in prison.
4. During the first Trump Administration and continuing throughout the Biden Administration, my office issued more than 20 reports concerning VA’s implementation of a new electronic health record system. VA signed the contract for the system in 2018 for an estimated cost of \$16 billion and a 10-year implementation. The system was intended to improve the quality of healthcare at VA by making it compatible with the system used by the Department of Defense, and by standardizing processes and procedures across VA’s more than 1,200 locations where veterans receive medical care. Our reports

identified numerous failures in the implementation of the new system, including incidents of patient harm caused by the system. Without our reports, VA would likely not have identified the failures in the system. As a result of our work, VA paused further implementation of the system and announced that they would continue implementation in 2026, after addressing the failures identified by my office's work.

5. During the Biden Administration, we issued a scathing report detailing the breakdowns in leadership and controls that resulted in the improper award of \$10.8 million in bonuses to 182 senior VA executives.
6. During my tenure as Inspector General, I have simultaneously served as a member of the Executive Council of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency ("CIGIE"), as well as chair of the CIGIE Investigations Committee from February 2019 to January 2025. I was also a member of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee from April 2020 to January 2025, and chair of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee Investigations Committee during that same time.
7. During my nearly nine-year tenure, I have served in both Republican and Democratic Administrations and have worked closely and collaboratively with members of both parties in the House and Senate. My office conducted its work in a nonpartisan manner, including conducting ethical investigations into several VA Secretaries and other senior leaders.

January 24 Firing

8. On January 24, 2025, at 7:39 p.m., I received an email from Sergio Gor, the Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel, with the subject line: "White House Notification." The email stated:

Dear Michael.

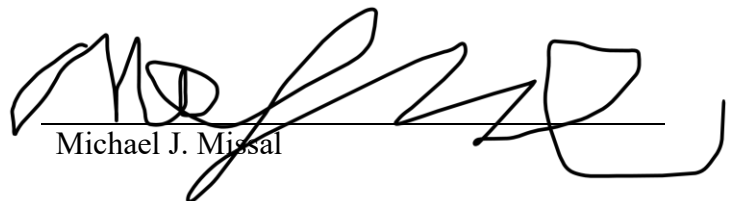
On behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that due to changing priorities your position as Inspector General of Department of Veterans Affairs is terminated, effective immediately.

Thank you for your service.

9. I have not received any direct communication from President Trump regarding my purported removal.
10. The agency shut off my access to the VA's systems sometime on January 27 or 28. I arranged to return my OIG equipment and retrieve my personal belongings on February 2.
11. My compensation ended on January 24, 2025. Due to the abrupt nature of my purported termination and notoriety, securing another professional position may be challenging.
12. We had over 1,000 active criminal investigations and about 250 healthcare inspections and audits in process when I received the January 24 email. I was also reviewing two reports mandated by Congress concerning VA's request to receive supplemental funding of \$3 billion for FY 2024 for disability benefits and \$12 billion for FY 2025 for healthcare.
13. My purported termination has prevented me from fulfilling my duties in connection with those reports and other vital work of my office, harming the millions of U.S. veterans who are served by the agency, as well as U.S. taxpayers. I am dedicated to continuing to fulfill my duties as Inspector General, so long as those acting under the direction of Secretary Collins stop obstructing me from doing so.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: February 13, 2025


Michael J. Missal