

Rep. Alford Remarks for Member Day on the VA's T4NG2 Contract

Chairman Williams and Ranking Member Velazquez, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on an important issue impacting veteran-owned small businesses across the United States.

One of our duties on this Committee is to make sure we allow the great men and women who served this country to pursue their American Dream and become small business owners. This includes ensuring they can access capital, cutting red tape, and holding federal agencies accountable for their actions. Unfortunately, our own Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has just failed our nation's veteran small businesses.

The VA recently awarded their 10 year, \$60 billion, IT contract named T4NG2. This contract only had 30 awardees. That is 60 billion taxpayer dollars over the next decade going to only 30 companies. Of those 30 companies, only 15 are small businesses. The decision to limit awards to such a small number of companies shuts out many eligible veteran-owned small businesses from competing for this critical IT work over the next decade to help secure our nation. If a small business does not get a slot on one of these large contracts, it can significantly harm their ability to win work, employ workers, and support our communities.

This is in stark contrast to the VA's predecessor contract for IT services, VETS 2. VETS 2 had 70 awardees, and 62 of whom are service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. When you compare these two contracts, the numbers do not make sense. The T4NG2 contract, valued over 12 times more, has only a quarter of the veteran-owned small businesses on it. This decision by the VA takes opportunities away from our veteran entrepreneurs.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) should be looking into this contract and pushing the VA to give fair opportunity to our nearly 2 million veteran small businesses. It is the responsibility of this Committee to ensure that the small businesses supporting the federal government are given the opportunities they deserve. When our veterans succeed, the nation succeeds. We must do better for our veteran entrepreneurs, and I look forward to working together with SBA on a solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.