

VALLEY

'This is a crucial job': Valley veteran working for Phoenix VA unexpectedly loses job in widespread layoff

On Monday, about 1,400 employees with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs were terminated, including some working in Arizona.



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help Valley veterans struggling to pay their mortgage and facing foreclosure, keep their homes.

"I felt like I was serving a bigger purpose than myself," Carreras said. "Being able to hear veterans call and say, 'Hey, thank you so much for helping me save my home,' was the best reward that I could ever ask for."

Being a veteran himself, serving four years in the Marine Corps, Carreras said it meant so much to help those who served our country. Giving them the help they deserve.

"This is a crucial job," he said.

Then on Monday just a few hours into his shift. Carreras received an email from the federal department that said he was terminated. When he went to his supervisors to ask about this, he said they were unaware of the situation.

"I was just heartbroken," Carreras said. "I was at a loss for words."

Carreras said about six other co-workers who started around the same time as him were also laid off. It's all part of widespread federal lay-offs by the Trump Administration. About 1,400 employees with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs were told Monday they would be out of a job.

While Carreras knew this was a possibility, he didn't think it would be for those helping veterans.

"I felt that our position was essential," he said. "We're protecting Veterans against foreclosure, and I would think that'd be essential, but apparently it's not."

According to the letter provided to 12News, it stated Carreras' job performance did not meet department standards. However, Carreras also provided his performance review that was given in October. His supervisor stated that Carreras was meeting expectations.

"I was on pace to get promoted," Carreras said.

12News received the following statement from a spokesperson for the Department of Veteran Affairs about the layoffs that states:

"The Phoenix VA Health Care System dismissed a limited number of probationary staff yesterday. This decision will have no negative effect on Veteran health care, benefits or other services and will allow VA to focus more effectively on its core mission of serving Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors. We cannot discuss specific personnel matters due to privacy concerns."

However, the now-former employee doesn't believe that will happen.

"If anything this is going to be a detriment to veterans," Carreras said.

His concern with this decision is Valley veterans won't receive the help they need in a timely matter. Meaning some may end up losing their homes and will have to live on the streets.

Carreras claimed the department was facing a staffing shortage before the layoffs happened.

"To have another veteran like myself or just a VA employee there to help guide them along the way, is crucial for them to save their home and be successful," he said.

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