

VA Mission-Critical Role Protections Act of 2025

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “**VA Mission-Critical Role Protections Act of 2025.**”

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

1. Veterans’ access to timely care depends on essential staff who manage scheduling, coordination, and frontline operations.
 2. VA leadership has previously claimed that “mission-critical roles” would be excluded from workforce reductions.
 3. In practice, essential roles — including schedulers, scheduling supervisors, and access coordinators — have been eliminated without clear justification.
 4. No standardized definition of “mission-critical roles” exists within VA, leaving essential functions vulnerable to arbitrary cuts.
 5. Veterans cannot access care if the personnel responsible for managing appointments and care coordination are reduced or eliminated.
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SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

1. “**Mission-critical role**” means any position identified as essential to patient access, continuity of care, or clinical safety, including but not limited to:

- Medical Support Assistants (schedulers),
 - Scheduling Supervisors,
 - Referral Coordinators,
 - Nurses directly engaged in access-to-care functions,
 - Other positions designated under subsection (b).
2. **“Validated justification”** means evidence, supported by staffing models or performance data, demonstrating that a role is no longer required or can be consolidated without harming access to care.
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SECTION 4. REQUIREMENT TO DEFINE MISSION-CRITICAL ROLES.

(a) **Publication.**— Within 180 days of enactment, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a comprehensive list of mission-critical roles.

(b) **Consultation.**— In defining such roles, the Secretary shall consult with:

1. The Government Accountability Office (GAO),
2. The Office of Inspector General (OIG),
3. Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs),
4. Employee unions representing VA staff.

(c) **Annual Updates.**— The list shall be reviewed and updated annually, with updates transmitted to Congress and made publicly available.

SECTION 5. PROTECTION AGAINST ELIMINATION OF MISSION-CRITICAL ROLES.

(a) **Prohibition.**— No mission-critical role may be eliminated, reduced, or consolidated without:

1. **Validated justification**, and
2. **Prior written notification to Congress** at least 60 days before implementation.

(b) **Certification.**— The Secretary must certify that eliminating or reducing a mission-critical role will not negatively impact veterans' access to care.

SECTION 6. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

(a) The Comptroller General shall provide an **annual report** to Congress evaluating:

1. VA's compliance with mission-critical role protections;
2. Whether justifications for eliminations are evidence-based;
3. The impact of staffing changes on wait times and access to care.

(b) Any failure to comply with Section 5 shall be reported as a violation of this Act and may result in suspension of workforce reduction funding.

SECTION 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

(a) The Secretary shall ensure compliance with this Act within 180 days of enactment.

(b) GAO and OIG shall have authority to conduct audits and investigations related to VA's designation and protection of mission-critical roles.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect immediately upon enactment.