

VA Whistleblower Empowerment Act of 2025

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “**VA Whistleblower Empowerment Act of 2025.**”

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

1. VA employees who refuse to alter data or who report manipulation often face retaliation, harassment, or career harm.
 2. Existing whistleblower protections are too broad and inconsistently applied, leaving employees vulnerable when disclosures relate specifically to data falsification or manipulation.
 3. Without strong protections, employees are discouraged from reporting misconduct, and systemic problems remain hidden from Congress.
 4. Whistleblowers are essential to uncovering falsified metrics, preventing harm to veterans, and holding VA leadership accountable.
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SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

1. “**Protected disclosure**” means any report made by a VA employee, contractor, or affiliate concerning the falsification, suppression, or manipulation of data, or retaliation resulting from refusal to alter data.

2. **“Coerced employee”** means an individual pressured, threatened, or otherwise compelled by a supervisor or official to alter or misrepresent data.
 3. **“Retaliation”** includes adverse personnel actions such as demotion, reassignment, loss of duties, denial of promotion, harassment, or termination in response to a protected disclosure.
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SECTION 4. EXPANSION OF PROTECTIONS.

(a) **Whistleblower Safeguards.**— Any employee making a protected disclosure under this Act shall be covered by federal whistleblower laws and entitled to immediate protections, including reinstatement, back pay, and attorney’s fees if retaliation occurs.

(b) **Specific Coverage.**— Disclosures related to data falsification, manipulation, or coercion shall be explicitly covered under whistleblower statutes.

(c) **Burden of Proof.**— Retaliatory intent shall be presumed unless the VA can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the action taken was unrelated to the disclosure.

SECTION 5. OIG OMBUDSMAN FOR DATA INTEGRITY.

(a) **Establishment.**— The VA Office of Inspector General shall establish a **Data Integrity Ombudsman** dedicated to:

1. Receiving complaints from coerced employees;
2. Ensuring confidentiality of disclosures;
3. Coordinating investigations of retaliation.

(b) **Reporting.**— The Ombudsman shall issue an **annual report to Congress** summarizing complaints received, investigations conducted, and outcomes.

SECTION 6. GAO REVIEW OF RETALIATION CLAIMS.

(a) **Independent Oversight.**— The Comptroller General shall conduct a review of retaliation claims filed under this Act at least once every two years.

(b) **Scope.**— The review shall assess:

1. The frequency of retaliation complaints;
2. VA's responsiveness to complaints;
3. Effectiveness of whistleblower protections.

(c) **Reporting.**— Findings shall be submitted to Congress and made publicly available.

SECTION 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

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

(b) The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) shall have authority to enforce whistleblower protections under this Act in coordination with the OIG.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect immediately upon enactment.