

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

I write today regarding recent actions taken at the Carl T. Hayden Phoenix Veterans Administration Medical Center (Phoenix VA).

Until last week, the Phoenix VA had proudly displayed 22 flags, representing the 22 Tribal Nations in Arizona, outside the facility. Last week, the VA callously left all of these flags at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community offices, saying that they can only display certain flags due to policy changes made by the administration that only permit the U.S. flag, flags of U.S. states and territories, military service flags, VA flags and official flags of U.S. agencies, and flags representing prisoners of war/missing in action (POW/MIA), Senior Executive Service (SES), military command units and burial flags for honoring veterans and reservists.

This decision by the administration flagrantly disrespects the immense sacrifices that Tribal Nations have made for our country, including battlefield sacrifices across every major conflict. Tribal communities serve our nation in some of the highest proportional rates of any American demographic, five times the national average. These removals, as well as the recent removal of content related to the Navajo Code Talkers from Department of Defense (DoD) websites, show a pattern of consistent disrespect to the heroic service that Tribal communities have given our country, and they deserve far better from the federal government.

To that end, I request that you urgently reverse this disrespectful course of action and return the flags of Arizona's tribes to display at the VA.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator