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***If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?***

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## **Statement from VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson**

***“I will continue to use VA’s authority to impose discipline where warranted by the evidence. That is simply the right thing to do for Veterans and taxpayers.”***

WASHINGTON – Today VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson released the following statement after decisions were issued related to disciplinary actions taken against two VBA employees:

“VA continues to pursue sustainable accountability for the Department, which requires us to follow evidence of wrongdoing wherever it may lead, issue disciplinary charges based on the evidence without regard to outside pressures, and ensure that every employee is afforded due process. This is how we must proceed because this is what is right for Veterans and taxpayers.

“While I felt demotions were appropriate for both executives, Diana Rubens and Kim Graves, I respect the decision on the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) judges’ to reverse the imposed penalties.

“The Choice Act created an oddity for VA Senior Executives where the MSPB judge is restricted to sustaining or reversing an imposed penalty and may not impose a lesser penalty, even when he or she believes a penalty is appropriate. No other agency functions by these rules. And while the law does not allow the judge to mitigate to a lesser penalty, I am not precluded from doing so and I intend to consider lesser penalties for both executives.

“To ensure any ultimate discipline is fair and appropriate, I have directed an expedited fact-finding inquiry into whether discipline of others involved in these matters is warranted based on new evidence that came out as this process unfolded. As I have in the past, I will use VA’s authority to impose discipline where warranted by the evidence. That is simply the right thing to do for Veterans and taxpayers.

“I will continue to take accountability actions based on my review of the evidence, not on media reports, hearsay or political pressure because we know that is how we ultimately best serve Veterans.”