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SNAPSHOT OVERSIGHT REPORT

THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SCANDAL – TWO YEARS LATER





OPEN THE BOOKS

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THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SCANDAL – TWO YEARS LATER

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Thomas W. Smith – Chairman of OpenTheBooks.com

“Open the Books is doing the work I envisioned when the Coburn-Obama bill became law. Their innovative app and other tools are putting sunlight through a magnifying glass.” March 11, 2014

Dr. Tom Coburn, Honorary Chairman of OpenTheBooks.com

OUR REPORT MADE POSSIBLE BY:

The “Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006”

Sponsors: Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) & Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL)

(Public Law 109-282, 109th Congress)

“Is the spending in the public interest or the special interest?”

– U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn

***“I know that restoring transparency is not only the surest way to achieve results,
but also to earn back the trust in government...”***

– U.S. Sen. Barack Obama

THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SCANDAL – TWO YEARS LATER

Two years ago Americans were horrified to learn that many of our nation’s veterans were dying on waiting lists while awaiting medical care at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities. The numbers were staggering. One report found that of the 800,000 records stalled in the VA system, 307,000 belonged to veterans who had already died. While not all of those veterans died because of VA mistakes, another report by then-U.S. Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. (who is the Honorary Chairman of Open the Books) found that more than 1,000 veterans died because of neglect that could be linked to VA mismanagement.

In the following two years not much has changed. In fact, many of the problems identified in wake of the VA scandal have not improved or have gotten worse. For instance, in January of 2016 taxpayers learned the number of veterans on waiting lists had actually *increased* by 50 percent in the previous year.

Even worse, any hope that the culture of the dysfunctional and incompetent VA had been reformed were dashed recently when VA Secretary Robert McDonald made an appalling comparison to waiting in line at Disney parks.

McDonald said, “When you go to Disney, do they measure the number of hours you wait in line? Or what’s important? What’s important is, what’s your satisfaction with the experience.”

The difference, of course, is Americans don’t die in large numbers while waiting in line at Disney. And waiting to get into Disney is something Americans do for fun. Waiting to see a doctor is something Americans do to save their lives.

Our new snapshot report looks at VA salaries and spending from 2012-2015 in the context of ongoing problems at the VA. Consider these key findings and facts:

- Today, nearly half a million veterans still wait to see a VA doctor. According to *USA Today*, more than 480,000 veterans were waiting more than 30 days for an appointment.
- While long wait times persisted the VA added 39,454 new positions to their payroll between 2012-2015. Fewer than ten percent of these new positions (3,591) were ‘Medical Officers,’ i.e. doctors.
- During this time period \$99.1 billion in salaries and bonuses flowed to 354,960 VA employees.
- Even after “reforms” were instituted, we found that one of every two bonuses continued to flow to the same people who collected bonuses during the scandal.
- Of the VA’s 354,960 employees, 19 percent (67,609) earned more than \$100,000 per year.
- Since 2012, total annual salaries increased by 168 percent over the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Since 2012, total annual salaries spending increased by 18.7 percent.
- Since 2012, total employee counts have increased by 39,449 or 12.5 percent.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS
ADDS 39,454
EMPLOYEES TO PAYROLL**

**ONLY 3,591
ARE DOCTORS**

**354,000
EMPLOYEES**

Top Salaries 2015

Department of Veteran Affairs

In the latest fiscal year available at OpenTheBooks.com, the Top 25 SALARIES are displayed below. These salaries represent only “pensionable” salary—the annual amount that figures into the eventual calculation of the employees retirement annuity. These figures are not total cost which includes perks & pension benefits.

NAME	SALARY	POSITION TITLE
Cacciarelli Thomas V	\$400,000	Medical Officer
Kim Hubert T	\$400,000	Medical Officer
Szerlip Nicholas John	\$400,000	Medical Officer
Das Mithilesh K	\$397,161	Medical Officer
Lewis Neil P	\$397,161	Medical Officer
Holman William L	\$395,729	Medical Officer
Smith Joseph K	\$395,000	Medical Officer
Holloway Kathryn L	\$394,219	Medical Officer
Harpole David H Jr	\$394,154	Medical Officer
Guthrie Barton L	\$394,150	Medical Officer
Hadley Mark N	\$394,150	Medical Officer
Sonel Ali F	\$394,024	Medical Officer
Agarwal Rakesh	\$393,699	Medical Officer
Hardaker William T Jr	\$393,699	Medical Officer
Maqbool Feroz	\$393,394	Medical Officer
Itani Kamal	\$392,154	Medical Officer
Robinson Harry J	\$391,452	Medical Officer
Turner Dennis A	\$391,120	Medical Officer
Fann James I	\$391,112	Medical Officer
Khan Muhammad R R	\$390,619	Medical Officer
Skirboll Stephen L	\$390,497	Medical Officer
Ha Jonathan David	\$390,302	Medical Officer
Sherrier Robert H	\$389,388	Medical Officer
Fosmire Helen	\$389,355	Medical Officer
Trachiotis Gregory D	\$389,024	Medical Officer

Salary Ranges: Department of Veteran Affairs



SOURCE: OPENTHEBOOKS.COM, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS SALARY RANGES FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS

Annual Salaries & Employee Counts

Department of Veteran Affairs

ACTUAL

YEAR	COUNT	SALARY	%CHANGE	AVG SALARY
2015	354,959	\$27,259,096,361	7.14%	\$76,795
2014	338,308	\$25,312,132,724	5.43%	\$74,820
2013	326,284	\$23,937,842,618	4.07%	\$73,365
2012	315,510	\$22,963,897,907	--	\$72,783
			16.64%	

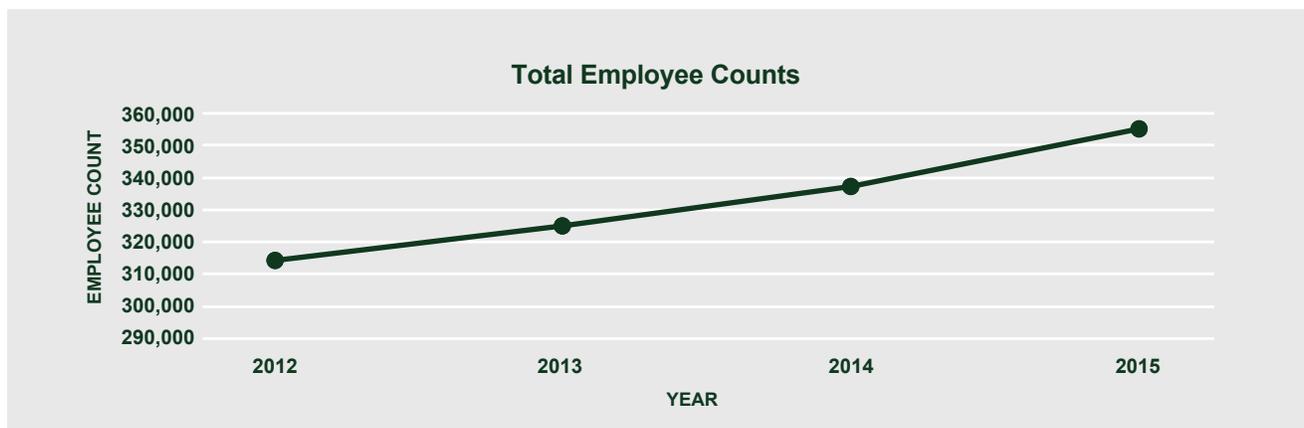
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI)

SALARY	%CHANGE
\$24,415,736,387	1.70%
\$24,007,607,067	3.00%
\$23,308,356,376	1.50%
\$22,963,897,907	--
6.20%	

FACT: Since 2012, Total Annual Salaries have increased by +168.39% over Consumer Price Index (CPI) = (inflation)



FACT: Since 2012, Total Annual Salaries have +\$4,295,198,454 or +18.70%



FACT: Since 2012, Total Employee Counts have increased by +39,449 or +12.50%

SOURCE: OPENTHEBOOKS.COM, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS SALARIES & EMPLOYEE COUNT



BACKGROUND ON OUR REPORT RESEARCH:

Our motto is ‘*Every Dime. Online. In Real Time.*’ Remember, it’s your money. Therefore, we attempt to provide non-partisan facts using the resources of the 2.6 billion captured public expenditures at OpenTheBooks.com. We leave systemic solutions to the public policy debate.

Across the policy continuum, everyone can stand against waste, fraud, duplication of services, and taxpayer abuse. Our goal is that the federally disclosed expenditures showcased in this oversight snapshot report aid in the education of all stakeholders and thereby fully inform the debate on all sides.

American Transparency (OpenTheBooks.com) Chairman of the Board Thomas W. Smith recognizes the hard work of our team...

Adam Andrzejewski, founder and Chief Executive Officer, provided data interpretation, gave context, and authored this report. **John Hart**, Senior Advisor provided drafting, editing and contextual analysis. **Craig Mijares**, Director of Information Technology, assembled and organized the datasets. **Matthew Tyrmand**, Deputy Director, contributed to the editing and helped disseminate this report to national media. Special thank you to our graphic designer, **Paul Romanowski**.

ABOUT OPENTHEBOOKS.COM

Our mission is to post online “every dime” taxed and spent by federal, state and local units of government across America. Currently, we display 2.6 billion lines of government spending and are the largest publically accessible database of government spending in the world. We use the latest in technology to display the spending, including the first-to-market mobile app – Open The Books - which hyper-localized all disclosed United States Government checkbook spending since 2000. As showcased in The Wall Street Journal, our app is free for Apple and Android.

Since 2013, we publish OpenTheBooks Oversight Reports: *The Militarization of America; The Department of Self-Promotion - \$4.4 Billion in Federal Agency PR Spending; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Export – Import Bank; Fortune 100 Companies; Small Business Administration Lending to the Wealthy Lifestyle; Veterans Administration Cash Compensation: Salaries and Bonuses; and Farm Subsidies in Urban Areas*. Learn more at OpenTheBooks.com.

DISCLAIMER:

This report quantifies public spending at ‘Veterans Affairs’ mostly from FY2012-FY2015, unless specifically delineated in the text. The data is the result of Freedom of Information requests under the 2006 ‘Google Your Government Act’ compiled at OpenTheBooks.com. To the extent that the government makes mistakes in the reporting of inaccurate or incomplete data, our report will reflect these same mistakes.



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