

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

**Memorandum**

Date: March 22, 2000

From: Director, Central Office Operations Division (52CO)

Subj: Addendum Report: Audit of Allegations Concerning the VA Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) Report No. 99-00055-47

To: Assistant Secretary for Planning and Analysis (008)

1. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performed additional review work on the accuracy of time and attendance reporting in the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) after the release of our January 7, 2000 report titled *Audit of Allegations Concerning the VA Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA)*, Report No. 99-00055-12. The work was performed in response to the Deputy Secretary's memorandum to the Inspector General (IG) dated January 6, 2000 that highlighted the need to reconcile leave discrepancies in order to ensure accountability and accurate reporting of the former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary's (PDAS) time and attendance. While conducting our previous audit work, we had received complaints that the former PDAS had a high rate of absenteeism and frequently did not attend official meetings she was expected to attend.

2. In order to resolve some of the questionable reporting of time and attendance we conducted an analysis of OCA office employee call activity, *CellularOne* call records for OCA employees, and telephone call records from the former PDAS's personal residence. Based on telephone records obtained from the above sources, we identified additional information to help resolve some of the outstanding instances of unrecorded leave used by the former PDAS. We also have enclosed information to facilitate the Department's ability to accurately update the former PDAS's attendance and payroll records and take whatever additional action is deemed appropriate. As part of this effort, we also reviewed local travel reimbursement claims submitted by the former PDAS, and the personal calendar maintained by OCA's support staff for the former PDAS as additional sources of information to assist with reconstructing the time and attendance of the former PDAS.

3. In November 1999, the Deputy Secretary requested the former PDAS to respond to recommendation *h* in the OIG's draft Audit Report of Allegations in the OCA and to report all personal leave used during the period July 1998 through July 1999. The Deputy Secretary's request afforded the former PDAS an opportunity to resolve specific attendance discrepancies in response to the OIG's reported concern that no leave had been recorded as used for the period July 1998 until May 7, 1999 in the Department's official time and attendance system. The former PDAS responded to the Deputy Secretary on December 3 and 10, 1999 indicating that she had not found any clear evidence that she was on leave on any of the specific dates addressed in his

memorandum, with the questionable exception of December 23, 1998. However, her response never adequately resolved and/or quantified the amount of leave used during the period the former PDAS was asked to attest to.

4. The former PDAS responded to the Deputy Secretary that based on her inability to obtain needed information and given the partial nature of her current records extra time was needed to ensure her response could be as accurate as possible. We have not received any additional information from the former PDAS to help facilitate ensuring an accurate and full disclosure of the leave used. However, we have reviewed and considered the former PDAS's responses to the Deputy Secretary and also considered independent telephone call information to help identify workdays where the former PDAS was not at her official duty station during the normal work hours.

5. Telephone records for specific workdays identified in the Deputy Secretary's November 22, 1999 memorandum to the former PDAS reasonably support the need for the Department to record 26 hours of annual/sick leave used by the former PDAS (*See Appendix I for additional details*). In addition, the Deputy Secretary also requested the former PDAS to identify the sick leave she used. The former PDAS had acknowledged to the OIG auditors and to the Deputy Secretary that her calendar showed sick leave was used January 11-14, 1999 but also indicated in her response to the Deputy Secretary that there was some discrepancy in the number of days used. Our review found that the telephone records of call activity places the former PDAS at her personal residence on the following official workdays, January 11,12,13,14,15,19, and 20, 1999. Call activity exists on those days from the former PDAS's home residence to VA Central Office phone extensions including OCA staff phones and from OCA staff phones to the former PDAS's residence between normal work hours. As a result, there is reasonable support for the Department to record 56 hours of annual/sick leave used by the former PDAS. (*See Appendix II for additional details*).

6. While conducting this analysis, additional potential leave usage was identified. The telephone records reviewed support the conclusion that the former PDAS was at home instead of at her official duty station on several additional occasions. We identified telephone call activity that shows 75 instances where (i) office and cell phones assigned to various OCA staff were used to contact the former PDAS at her home during official work hours; and, (ii) calls were placed from the former PDAS's home residence to VA phones and OCA staff phones. Based on this information, we identified 31 official workdays where call activity occurs that the former PDAS was at home, however we could not quantify the amount of leave that needs to be recorded. For the days identified, the former PDAS should be held accountable to support the reason and time she was at home during official workdays. (*See Appendix III for additional details.*)

7. It is the former PDAS's personal responsibility to ensure the leave she used was accurately recorded in the Department's official time and attendance system. We did not identify an approved telecommuting agreement or compressed work schedule that permitted work to be conducted from the former PDAS's personal residence during normal duty hours. The additional information provided in this report should assist the Department in completing action concerning recommendation *h* (ensure the former PDAS reports all personal leave used during the period July 1998 through July 1999) included in the previously issued OIG Audit Report on Allegations in the OCA. The review results in this report are provided for your use in taking corrective actions concerning recommendation *h* included in the previously issued OCA report. We will continue to follow up on the status of that report's recommendations.

**For the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing**

*(Original signed by:)*

**STEPHEN L. GASKELL**

Appendix I—Review of Telephone Records and Other Supporting Information for Dates Identified in the Deputy Secretary's November 22, 1999 Memorandum to the Former PDAS.

Appendix II—Review of Telephone Records Relating to Annual/Sick Leave Used by the Former PDAS in 1999.

Appendix III—Identification of Other Official Workdays Where Telephone Records Place the Former PDAS at Home During Official Work Hours.

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House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

**Review of Telephone Records and Other Supporting Information for Dates Identified in the Deputy Secretary's November 22, 1999 Memorandum to the Former PDAS.**

Based on the review of telephone records for the specific work days identified in the Deputy Secretary's November 22, 1999 memorandum to the former PDAS of the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) reasonable support exists for the Department to record 26 hours of annual/sick leave used by the former PDAS for the dates identified.

- **November 5, 1998** - Based on the former PDAS's response that e-mail documentation supports she was working in OCA offices and a review of the existing call activity the response is acceptable. (No leave needs to be recorded for this date.)
- **November 13, 1998** - We confirmed the former PDAS was in an official travel status. (No leave needs to be recorded for this day.)
- **December 23, 1998** - No call activity exists. Since the former PDAS was listed on the revised schedule of absences and listed as off in the desk calendar we concluded she was not at her official duty station. (Record 8 hours of leave.)
- **April 2, 1999** - A review of call activity supports that an OCA staff member used a government issued cell phone to contact the former PDAS at her personal residence in the afternoon. Thus, call activity supports the former PDAS was at home for at least part of that official day. (We estimated that at least 2 hours leave should be recorded based on the time span of the call activity identified. Recording a 2 hour portion of this day provides consideration for the former PDAS's December 10, 1999 response to the Deputy Secretary where she noted she had identified documentation in the Office of Congressional Affairs that supports she had a scheduled meeting with the VA Secretary on that date.)
- **April 5, 1999** - One FTS call was placed from the former PDAS's office phone at 10:43 am. (No leave needs to be recorded for this day.)
- **April 28, 1999** - Call activity reasonably supports that the former PDAS was at home during the morning hours of April 28, 1999. Calls were placed from the former PDAS's home phone to VACO phone extensions during that time. (In consideration of the former PDAS's December 10' response to the Deputy Secretary that e-mail records indicate she was present for duty, we estimated that recording 4 hours of leave for the portion of the day the telephone records placed her at home was reasonable.)

- **May 4, 1999** - Call activity supports that the former PDAS placed a high volume of calls to VACO phones throughout the day from her government issued cell phone. (In the absence of adequate support that the PDAS attended a Senate Finance Committee hearing or was conducting official VA business off-site, record 8 hours of leave for this day.)
- **May 7, 1999** - Call activity supports that an OCA staff member placed four calls to the former PDAS during the morning of that day. (Record 4 hours of leave for periods of time calls were occurring.)
- **May 12-14, 1999** - We confirmed leave was recorded in the VA's electronic time and attendance for May 12, 1999, sufficient call activity exists that the former PDAS was working at VACO on May 13 and 14. (No leave needs to be recorded for this date.)
- **June 22, 1999** – The Department's time and attendance system supports that the former PDAS recorded 8 hours leave used on this day. (No action needed.)
- **June 24, 1999** – The Department's time and attendance system supports that the former PDAS recorded 3 hours leave used on this date. Call activity from OCA office phones also supports that work was conducted on this day. (No action needed.)
- **June 25, 1999** – There is limited call activity available on this day, however one cell phone call was placed to OCA offices from the PDAS's cell phone. (No action needed.)
- **July 12-16, 1999** - Records support the PDAS was in official travel status and reported 22.5 hours annual leave used over July 14, 15, and 16. (No action needed.)

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On days where partial leave was identified for action (April 2, 28; May 7), the telephone records did not show sufficient data to provide proof of attendance at the former PDAS's official duty station.

**Review of Telephone Records Relating to Annual/Sick Leave Used by the Former PDAS in 1999**

The Deputy Secretary had requested the former PDAS to identify the annual/sick leave she used in his November 22, 1999 memorandum. The former PDAS had previously acknowledged to the OIG auditors that sick leave was used. She also noted in her December 10, 1999 response to the Deputy Secretary that there was some discrepancy in the number of days involved. Our review found that telephone records of call activity places the former PDAS at her personal residence on the following official workdays, January 11,12,13,14,15,19 and 20, 1999. Call activity exists from the former PDAS's home residence to VA Central Office phone extensions including OCA staff phones and from OCA staff phones to the former PDAS's residence between normal work hours. As a result, there is reasonable support for the Department to record 56 hours of annual/sick leave used by the former PDAS. The associated call activity for the days in question follows:

Number Phoned	Calling From	Call Placed From	Date	Time	Caller	Staff Member Called
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/11/99	10:32 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	01/11/99	5:46 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/12/99	1:47 PM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/12/99	3:46 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/13/99	3:08 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/14/99	10:05 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/14/99	12:49 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/14/99	2:40 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/14/99	3:48 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/14/99	5:39 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/15/99	2:50 PM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/19/99	9:58 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/19/99	12:18 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/19/99	2:44 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/19/99	2:53 PM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/19/99	3:04 PM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	01/20/99	10:23 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/20/99	2:50 PM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/20/99	3:07 PM		OCA Staff

**Identification of Other Official Workdays Where Telephone Records Place the Former PDAS at Home During Official Work Hours**

Additional leave discrepancies were identified, while conducting the analysis of telephone call activity. Call activity supports that the former PDAS was at home instead of at her official duty station on official workdays that were not previously identified. We identified 75 instances where call activity exists that shows (i) office and cell phones assigned to various OCA staff were used to contact the former PDAS at her home during official work hours; and, (ii) calls were placed from the former PDAS's home residence to VA phones and OCA staff phones. Based on this information, we identified 31 official workdays that the PDAS was at home, however we could not quantify the amount of leave that needs to be recorded. For the days identified, we concluded the former PDAS should be held accountable to support the reason and time she was at home during official workdays. For example, there are 4 days that the call records indicate that the former PDAS may have spent the entire day at home. The associated call activity for the dates in question follows:

Number Phoned	Calling From	Call Placed From	Date	Time	Caller	Staff Member Called
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	08/12/98	12:01 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	08/12/98	12:03 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	08/28/98	10:50 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	08/28/98	11:33 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	09/18/98	6:46 AM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	09/18/98	6:47 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	09/18/98	6:49 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	09/21/98	11:47 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	09/28/98	5:24 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	10/08/98	8:20 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	10/09/98	7:37 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	10/23/98	5:35 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	10/28/98	2:00 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	10/28/98	5:47 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	11/23/98	2:57 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/01/98	12:14 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/01/98	6:00 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/02/98	11:26 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/17/98	8:32 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/17/98	8:35 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/17/98	8:38 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/17/98	9:30 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	12/24/98	10:07 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/04/99	4:55 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/04/99	4:57 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	01/06/99	5:36 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	01/25/99	1:01 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	01/25/99	1:04 PM	OCA Staff	

## Appendix III

Number Phoned	Calling From	Call Placed From	Date	Time	Caller	Staff Member Called
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/02/99	2:19 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/03/99	8:19 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/03/99	10:03 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/03/99	10:47 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/03/99	11:12 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/03/99	11:15 AM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/03/99	11:27 AM		OCA Staff
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/03/99	11:53 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/03/99	12:16 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/03/99	12:37 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	10:16 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	11:34 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	11:37 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/04/99	11:41 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/04/99	11:43 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	12:05 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	4:17 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/04/99	4:17 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	4:21 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	4:23 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	4:29 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/04/99	5:11 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	03/04/99	5:24 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/11/99	7:25 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/11/99	7:52 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/11/99	7:54 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/11/99	7:57 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/12/99	10:30 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	03/19/99	5:56 PM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	03/29/99	4:45 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/02/99	3:36 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/02/99	5:23 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/02/99	5:50 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	04/07/99	8:31 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	04/07/99	8:33 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/07/99	4:36 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	04/15/99	6:45 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/16/99	4:25 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	PDAS Home	04/28/99	8:57 AM		VACO Extensions
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/29/99	9:04 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/29/99	10:14 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	04/29/99	10:31 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	04/29/99	12:14 PM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	05/07/99	11:09 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Office	05/07/99	11:17 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	05/07/99	11:29 AM	OCA Staff	
XXX-XXX-XXXX	XXX-XXX-XXXX	Cell	05/07/99	11:59 AM	OCA Staff	