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Romley named special adviser to VA secretary

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by [Chris Casacchia](#) - The Business Journal

Former Maricopa County attorney Rick Romley has been named special adviser to highly criticized [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) Secretary R. James Nicholas.

In his new role, Romley will be responsible for evaluating the VA's procedures and processes and developing recommendations for improving the organization's security systems.

Rick Romley is a well-respected attorney and veteran who will provide a critical outsider's perspective as we work diligently to reform the department's information security policies and procedures," said Nicholas in a statement. The announcement comes just weeks after the personal data of 26 million veterans was stolen from a VA analyst's home.

"The case of the VA employee's laptop is certainly an alarming one, with millions of people put at risk of becoming victims of identity theft," said Mark Pribish, director of Identity Theft Management Services for Phoenix-based [Merchants Information Solutions](#).

Veterans Affairs has caught heat over the debacle and the way they've handled public relations following the incident.

Nicholas was not told about the May 3 theft until May 16 and didn't go public with the information until May 22, saying he wanted to set up a Web site for affected veterans, according to numerous published reports.

"Over the next few months, I look forward to serving my fellow veterans by investigating and making recommendations to the Secretary on how the department can best prevent future information security incidents," Romley said.

Romley's appointment came days after Nicholas announced several personnel changes in the VA's Office of Policy and Planning, the division in which the security system was compromised.

Romley served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam until he was injured and has received numerous commendations for his service, including the Purple Heart.

As an attorney, Romley has testified before Congress on issues such as violent crime, terrorism, victims' rights and public corruption. In the early 90s, he successfully prosecuted "AzScam," one of the largest public corruption cases in state history. Romley lives in Scottsdale with his wife Carol and three sons, Darin, David and Aaron.