

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 4, 2013

Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Eric Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Hagel and Secretary Shinseki,

Suicides among service members and veterans continue at unacceptably high levels, despite efforts by the Department of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), and the private sector. Suicides in 2012 among active duty personnel reached 349, a record level. In addition, according to the VA's 2012 Suicide Data Report released February 1, 2013, certain segments of the veteran population may be chronically under-reported, meaning that the current estimate of 18 to 22 veteran deaths by suicide per day may in fact be underestimated. By collecting information about the physical injuries sustained by suicide victims, we can get a better sense of the root causes of military and veteran suicide.

As you know, the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) has become the weapon of choice for groups seeking to achieve their goals through terror and violence. According to DOD data as well as data compiled by the Global Campaign against IEDs, during the period November 2011 through October 2012, there were over 15,000 IED events against coalition forces in Afghanistan and 58 percent of coalition casualties were from IEDs. While the number Killed in Action has decreased, the number of wounded who must live with the physical and psychological scars is growing. As we prepare to bring 34,000 troops home from Afghanistan this year and the entirety of the 66,000 member strong force by the end of 2014, we must gain a better understanding of the psychological impact of injuries from IEDs.

Evidence has suggested that blast injuries, including but not limited to those causing damage to vision or hearing, can have a severe psychological impact, contributing to PTSD and other emotional distress that can play a major contributing role in suicides. In order to get a better understanding of the connection between blast injuries and suicide, and in support of the ongoing National Mortality Study, conducted by the VA with the cooperation of the DOD and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we respectfully request the following information:

1. What blast trauma tissue and physiological studies and other IED blast and injury related research is being conducted within the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs by any organization (JIEDDO, DARPA, medical facilities, etc.)?
2. Which of these studies are (or were) jointly conducted by the departments and with whom?



OSD002588-13

3. What process is used to share the results of this research within the departments, with Congress, and among VSOs and other partners such as the Global Campaign Against IEDs?
4. What demographics and other data (including date of suicide or attempt, branch of service, state of residency, combat tours completed, status as a DOD contractor in OIF or OEF, etc.) is being compiled as part of the on-going National Mortality study by the VA?

In addition, we ask that the following areas of inquiry be added to the study plan for the National Mortality Study and provided to Congress upon its completion.

1. How many service members or veterans who committed or attempted suicide were the direct victims of an IED attack? If so, what injuries did he or she sustain?
2. If the service member or veteran was the indirect victim of an IED attack, provide the number of IED attacks on his or her unit during the period the service member or veteran was assigned and the casualties for that unit during that period, if known.
3. Was the service member or veteran diagnosed with PTSD or TBI before the suicide or attempted suicide?
4. Did the service member or veteran seek or receive suicide prevention counseling or treatment before the suicide or attempted suicide?
5. Specify autopsy findings (and their corresponding frequencies) potentially indicative of prior TBI. For example (but not limited to), chronic traumatic encephalopathy and increases in associated lipid compounds.
6. More than three years ago, in the National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) for 2008 and 2009, Congress mandated that DOD establish a joint injury registry between DOD and VA for TBI, Vision, Hearing, and limb extremity/amputee injuries all common from IEDs. What is the status of these joint traumatic injury registries?

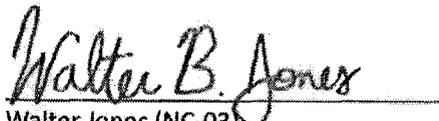
Thank you for your consideration.

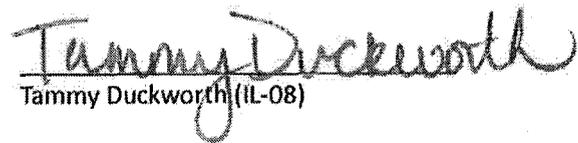

Dan Benishak MD (MI-01)

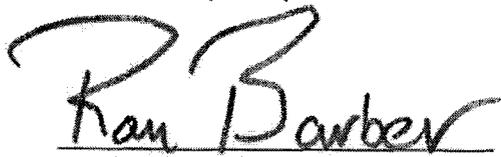

Julia Brownley (CA-26)

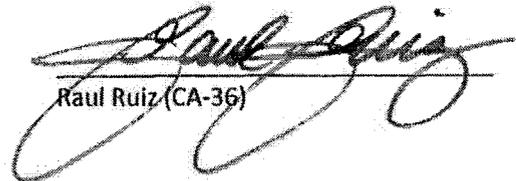

Mike Michaud (ME-02)

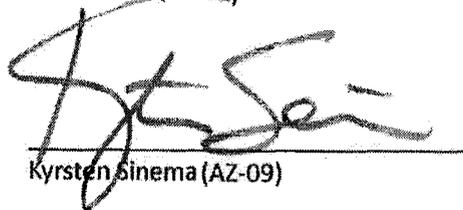

Mike Coffman (CO-06)

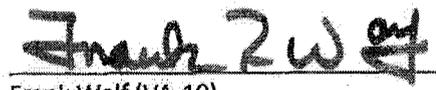

Walter Jones (NC-03)


Tammy Duckworth (IL-08)


Ron Barber (AZ-02)


Raul Ruiz (CA-36)

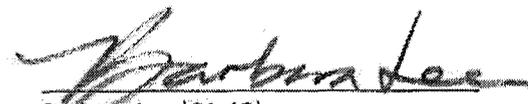

Kyrsten Sinema (AZ-09)


Frank Wolf (VA-10)


Mike Fitzpatrick (PA-08)


Richard Hanna (NY-22)


John Conyers (MI-13)

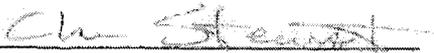

Barbara Lee (CA-13)


Gloria Negrete McLeod (CA-35)


Gerry Connolly (VA-11)


Tim Ryan (OH-13)


Kerry Bentivolio (MI-11)


Chris Stewart (UT-02)


C.A. Dutch Ruppberger (MD-02)


Charlie Rangel (NY-13)


Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)

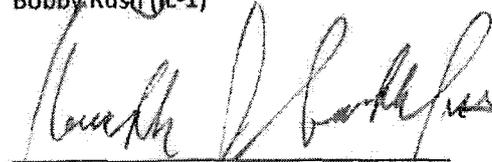

Robert Latta (OH-5)


Raul Grijalva (AZ-03)


Rick Larsen (WA-02)


Bobby Rush (IL-1)


Ed Whitfield (KY-1)


Keith Rothfus (PA-12)


Gwen Moore (WI-4)


Jim Himes (CT-4)


James McGovern (MA-2)


Alan Lowenthal (CA-47)


Tim Walz (MN-1)


Dina Titus (NV-1)


Beto O'Rourke (TX-16)


Steve Daines (MT)

Ken Calvert
Ken Calvert (CA-42)

Ann M. Kuster
Ann McLane Kuster (NH-2)

Mark Takano
Mark Takano (CA-41)

Juan Vargas
Juan Vargas (CA-51)

Andy Harris
Andy Harris (MD-1)

Tom Latham
Tom Latham (IA-3)

Louise Slaughter
Louise Slaughter (NY-25)

Mike Honda
Mike Honda (CA-17)

Jan Schakowsky
Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)

Kathy Castor
Kathy Castor (FL-14)

Gene Green
Gene Green (TX-29)

Donald Payne, Jr.
Donald Payne (NJ-10)

Marcia Fudge
Marcia Fudge (OH-11)

Lynn Westmoreland
Lynn Westmoreland (GA-3)

Earl Blumenauer
Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)

Kevin Cramer
Kevin Cramer (ND)

Jim McDermott
Jim McDermott (WA-7)

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2013

Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel,

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, signed into law on January 2, 2013, provided specific religious freedom protections for servicemembers generally and chaplains specifically. The provisions require the Armed Forces to accommodate servicemembers' moral and religious convictions, as long as they do not "threaten good order and discipline." The language also prohibits the military from using an individual's beliefs as the basis for adverse personnel action and ensures that chaplains will not be forced "to perform any rite, ritual, or ceremony that is contrary to [their] conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs."

When President Obama signed the NDAA into law he contemporaneously issued a statement criticizing several provisions of the bill, including the religious freedom protections. The President called the protections "unnecessary and ill-advised" and said "The Secretary of Defense will ensure that the implementing regulations do not permit or condone discriminatory actions that compromise good order and discipline or otherwise violate military codes of conduct. My Administration remains fully committed to continuing the successful implementation of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and to protecting the rights of gay and lesbian service members; Section 533 will not alter that."

It is offensive for the President to suggest that protecting the free exercise of religion safeguarded by the Constitution will result in discriminatory actions that compromise good order and discipline. Labeling servicemembers of faith as discriminatory does a disservice to the countless individuals who bravely serve alongside people of diverse political, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Despite the President's insinuation to the contrary, we are confident that the implementation of the religious freedom protections will not hamper the respect and professionalism displayed by men and women in uniform.

Our primary concern lies with the regulations the Department of Defense (DoD) will issue to implement the NDAA religious freedom protections. The constitutional separation of powers requires that DoD issue implementing regulations that exemplify congressional intent, not the President's personal opinion on the merit of the measure. DoD is responsible for executing the law as written.

Congress included religious freedom protections in the NDAA to ensure that servicemembers of faith are not singled out for intimidation and adverse personnel action because of their religious beliefs; and that chaplains are not forced to participate in actions that violate their consciences. Our request is simply that DoD employ safeguards to ensure that it does not trample these



constitutionally protected religious freedoms in its pursuit of other objectives. We call on DoD to enthusiastically accommodate servicemembers' moral and religious convictions and refrain from using servicemembers' beliefs as the basis for adverse personnel action.

Amidst the aggressive changes made by the Administration, servicemembers of faith must not be demeaned or overlooked. These individuals do not leave their faith at home when they volunteer to serve. We remain committed to ensuring that they are never forced to do so.

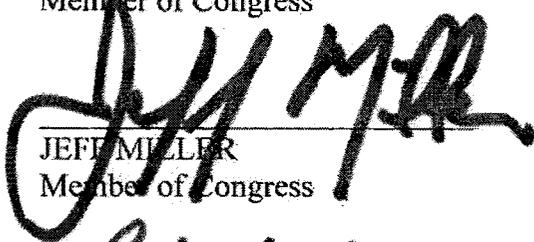
Sincerely,



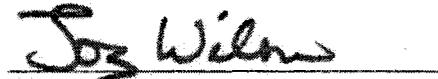
J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress



MIKE MCINTYRE
Member of Congress



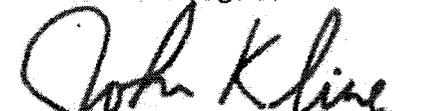
JEFF MILLER
Member of Congress



JOE WILSON
Member of Congress



ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress



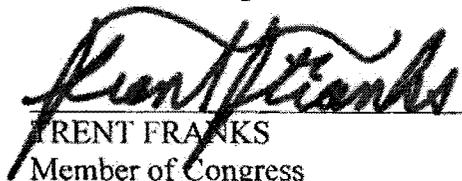
JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress



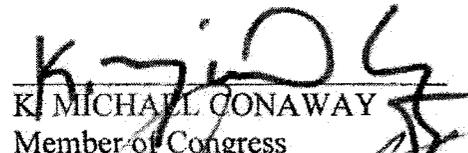
WALTER JONES
Member of Congress



ROB BISHOP
Member of Congress



TRENT FRANKS
Member of Congress



K. MICHAEL CONAWAY
Member of Congress



DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress



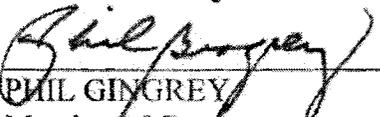
JOHN FLEMING
Member of Congress



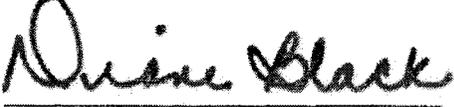
VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress


SCOTT GARRETT
Member of Congress


STEVE SOUTHERLAND
Member of Congress


PHIL GINGREY
Member of Congress


RENEE ELLMERS
Member of Congress


DIANE BLACK
Member of Congress


MORGAN GRIFFITH
Member of Congress

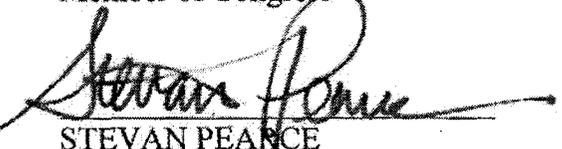

TIM WALBERG
Member of Congress

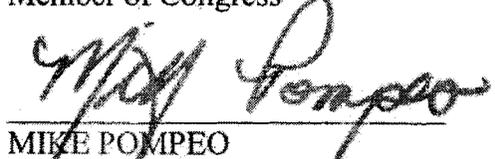

MARSHA BLACKBURN
Member of Congress

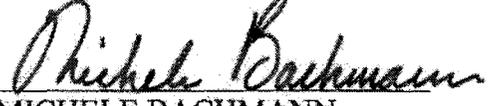

RANDY NEUGEBAUER
Member of Congress

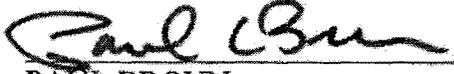

ROBERT LATTA
Member of Congress

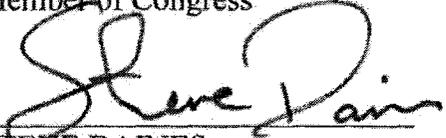

ALAN NUNNELEE
Member of Congress

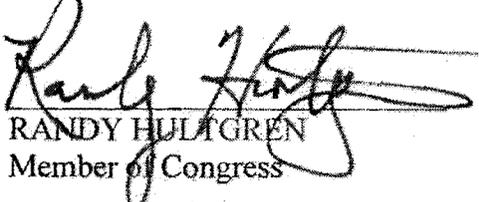

STEVAN PEARCE
Member of Congress

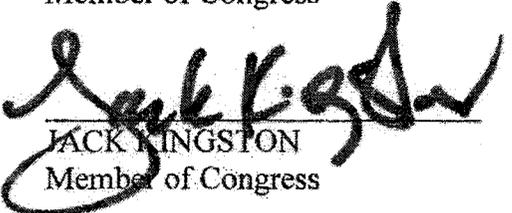

MIKE POMPEO
Member of Congress


MICHELE BACHMANN
Member of Congress


PAUL BROUN
Member of Congress


STEVE DAINES
Member of Congress


RANDY HULTGREN
Member of Congress


JACK KINGSTON
Member of Congress

Austin Scott

AUSTIN SCOTT
Member of Congress

Steve Palazzo

STEVE PALAZZO
Member of Congress

Kristi Noem

KRISTI NOEM
Member of Congress

Jim Bridenstine

JIM BRIDENSTINE
Member of Congress

Jim Jordan

JIM JORDAN
Member of Congress

Jeb Hensarling

JEB HENSARLING
Member of Congress

Bob Goodlatte

BOB GOODLATTE
Member of Congress

Jason Chaffetz

JASON CHAFFETZ
Member of Congress

Joe Pitts

JOE PITTS
Member of Congress

James Lankford

JAMES LANKFORD
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis

GUS BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress

Chris Smith

CHRIS SMITH
Member of Congress

Bill Flores

BILL FLORES
Member of Congress

Robert B. Aderholt

ROBERT ADERHOLT
Member of Congress

Tim Huelskamp

TIM HUELSKAMP
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper

GREGG HARPER
Member of Congress

Sam Johnson

SAM JOHNSON
Member of Congress

Frank Wolf

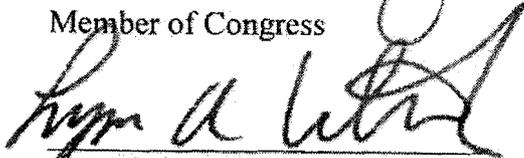
FRANK WOLF
Member of Congress



RANDY WEBER
Member of Congress



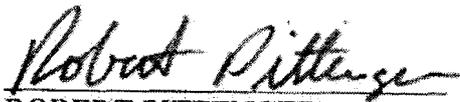
BILL HUIZENGA
Member of Congress



LYNN WESTMORELAND
Member of Congress



STEVE STIVERS
Member of Congress



ROBERT PITTENGER
Member of Congress



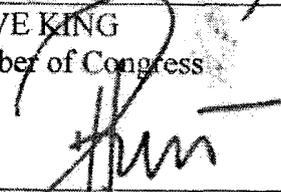
DOUG LAMALFA
Member of Congress



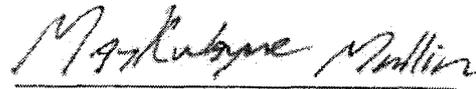
LOUIE GOHMERT
Member of Congress



STEVE KING
Member of Congress



ROBERT HURT
Member of Congress



MARKWAYNE MULLIN
Member of Congress



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel,

It has come to our attention that as recently as April 23, 2013, Pentagon officials met with Mr. Michael "Mikey" Weinstein, Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), to discuss religious freedom in the military. As we have great concern regarding numerous inflammatory statements from Mr. Weinstein in recent weeks, we are seeking further clarification on the meeting that took place late last month.

In a recent posting in his own words, Mr. Weinstein characterized men and women of the Christian faith as, "monsters who terrorize their fellow Americans" and offered consent to labeling individual faith based family groups as "hate groups." Mr. Weinstein also urged exposure of these "pathologically anti-gay, Islamophobic, and rabidly intolerant agitators," equating them as "die-hard enemies of the United States Constitution." There are additional previous examples where Mr. Weinstein compares men and women of faith serving in the Pentagon to the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and followers of the Christian faith to that of Hitler and Stalin. Also of concern are statements equating spiritual expression to "spiritual rape" and sedition and treason within the military. Such sentiments are consistent throughout Mr. Weinstein's printed and other media materials.

We question the Pentagon's judgment and reasoning in accepting a meeting from someone with a history of such statements and sentiments like Mr. Weinstein. We would respectfully request clarification on the nature of the meeting and detailed information regarding the following items:

1. Confirmation of a meeting between Pentagon officials and representatives from MRFF, as well as a list of meeting attendees, both military and civilian;
2. The purpose of the meeting, specifically whether the meeting was organized to inform deliberative policy for the Armed Forces, as well as a summary of the meeting's discussion;
3. Prior to arranging this meeting, were Pentagon officials aware of Mr. Weinstein's previous statements, including those referenced above?
4. In addition to any meetings already held, are there additional meetings scheduled?



OSD005625-13

Noting that this is a particularly critical time for the Department of Defense as they finalize regulations protecting the moral and religious convictions of service members and military chaplains, we would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Thank you and we look forward to the favor of a reply.

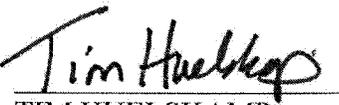
Sincerely,


JOHN FLEMING, M.D.
Member of Congress

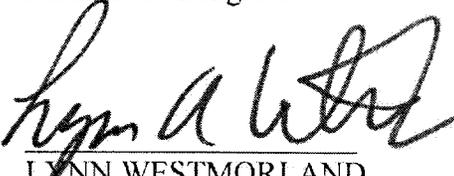

STEVE SCALISE
Member of Congress


JOSEPH R. PITTS
Member of Congress


MICHELE BACHMANN
Member of Congress

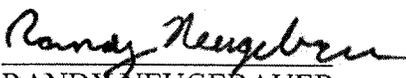

TIM HUELSKAMP
Member of Congress

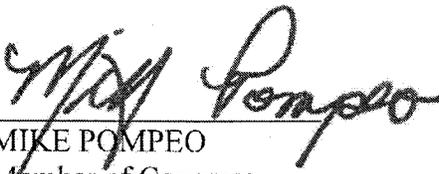

JOHN R. CARTER
Member of Congress


LYNN WESTMORLAND
Member of Congress


LYNN JENKINS
Member of Congress


LOUIE GOHMERT
Member of Congress

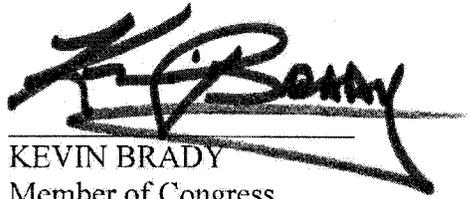

RANDY NEUGEBAUER
Member of Congress

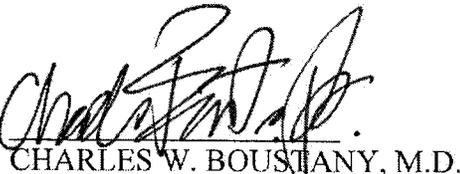

MIKE POMPEO
Member of Congress


FRANK R. WOLF
Member of Congress

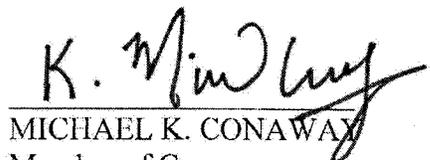

TOM COTTON
Member of Congress


KENNY MARCHANT
Member of Congress


KEVIN BRADY
Member of Congress

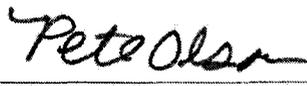

CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, M.D.
Member of Congress


ALAN NUNNELEE
Member of Congress

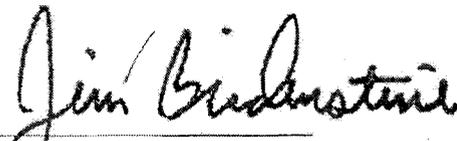

MICHAEL K. CONAWAY
Member of Congress



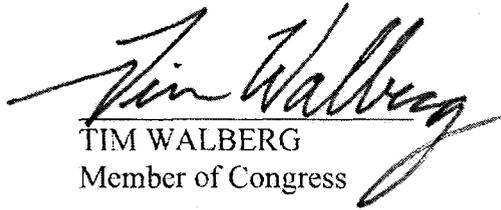
STEVAN PEARCE
Member of Congress



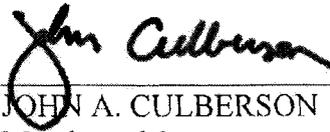
PETE OLSON
Member of Congress



JIM BRIDENSTINE
Member of Congress



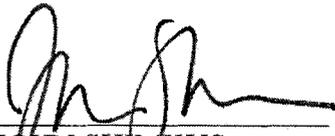
TIM WALBERG
Member of Congress



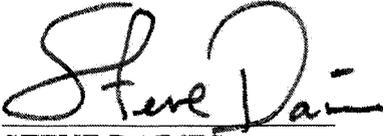
JOHN A. CULBERSON
Member of Congress



VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress



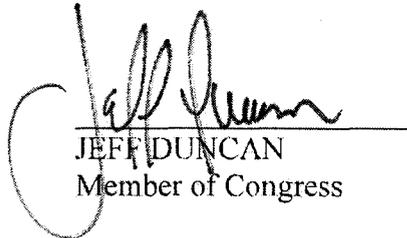
JOHN SHIMKUS
Member of Congress



STEVE DAINES
Member of Congress



TRENT FRANKS
Member of Congress



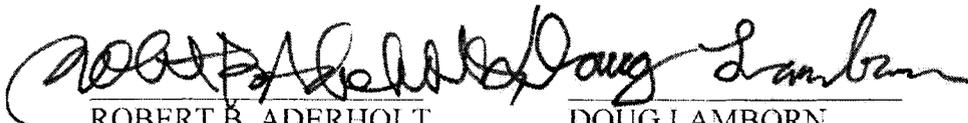
JEFF DUNCAN
Member of Congress



BILL JOHNSON
Member of Congress



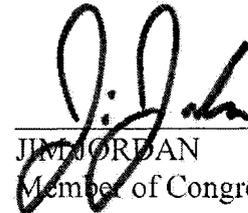
STEVE CHABOT
Member of Congress



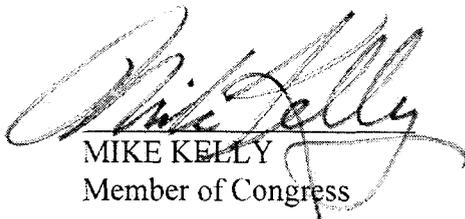
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT
Member of Congress



DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



JIM JORDAN
Member of Congress



MIKE KELLY
Member of Congress



STEVEN M. PALAZZO
Member of Congress



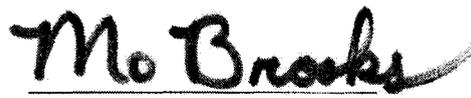
ANDY HARRIS, M.D.
Member of Congress



MARKWAYNE MULLIN
Member of Congress



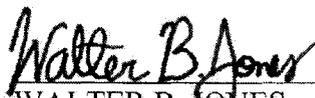
AUSTIN SCOTT
Member of Congress



MO BROOKS
Member of Congress



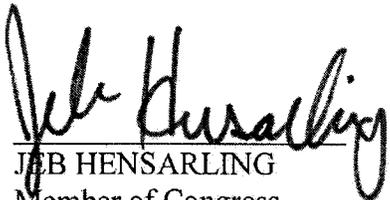
ROB BISHOP
Member of Congress

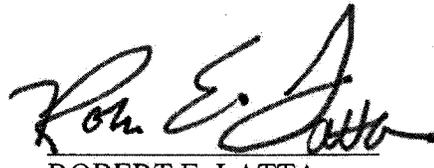


WALTER B. JONES
Member of Congress

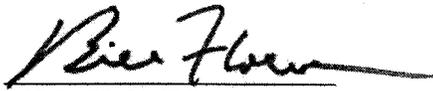


KEITH J. ROTHFUS
Member of Congress

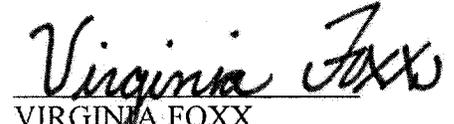

JEB HENSARLING
Member of Congress

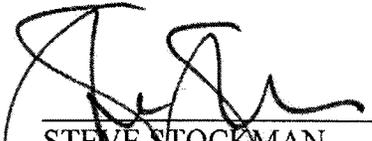

ROBERT E. LATTA
Member of Congress


RON DESANTIS
Member of Congress


BILL FLORES
Member of Congress

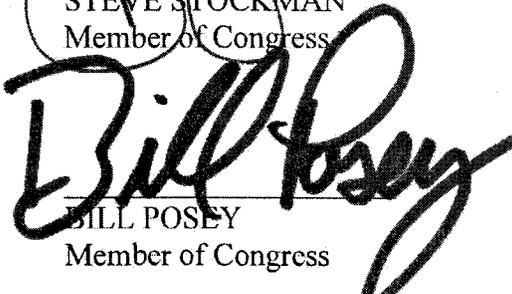

KERRY BENTIVOLIO
Member of Congress

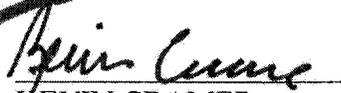

VIRGINIA FOXX
Member of Congress

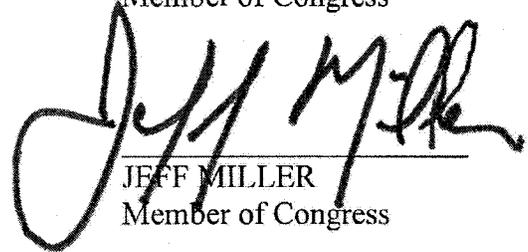

STEVE STOCKMAN
Member of Congress


LAMAR SMITH
Member of Congress


PAUL C. BROUN, M.D.
Member of Congress


BILL POSEY
Member of Congress

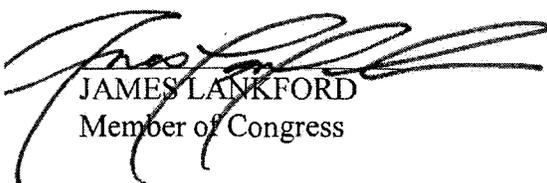

KEVIN CRAMER
Member of Congress


JEFF MILLER
Member of Congress


JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress


RICHARD B. NUGENT
Member of Congress


JACK KINGSTON
Member of Congress


JAMES LANKFORD
Member of Congress


TODD ROKITA
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2013

The Honorable Charles Hagel
Secretary of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel,

Religious freedom is an integral component of America's greatness and has been a vital pillar of our nation from the very beginning. As you noted during the House Armed Services Committee Hearing on April 11, 2013, the protection of religious freedom is fundamental to our country. Congress recognized this fact when it included religious conscience protections for our servicemembers in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

The conscience protections which Congress included in section 533 of the National Defense Authorization Act provided specific religious freedom protections for servicemembers generally and chaplains specifically. The provisions require the Armed Forces to accommodate servicemembers' moral and religious convictions, as long as they do not "threaten good order and discipline." The language also prohibits the military from using an individual's beliefs as the basis for adverse personnel action and ensures that chaplains will not be forced "to perform any rite, ritual, or ceremony that is contrary to [their] conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs."

Upon signing the NDAA into law, President Obama said the conscience protections were "unnecessary and ill-advised." This statement, coupled with recent events, raises concerns that the military is developing a culture that is hostile to religion. A recently revealed power point presentation used in equal opportunity training to an Army reserve unit in Pennsylvania included evangelical Christians, Catholics, Mormons, Sunni Muslims, and some Jews on a list of religious extremist groups alongside groups like Al Qaeda and Hamas. A memo regarding visitation policies at Walter Reed issued in December 2011 prohibited visitors from bringing Bibles and other religious materials on the premises. A particularly concerning memorandum issued on September 1, 2011, General Norton A. Schwartz prohibited commanders from notifying Airmen about Chaplain Corps programs, stating that only Air Force chaplains are trained to provide leadership on religious matters.

As you acknowledged, these assaults should not be happening. Congress deliberately included religious freedom protections in the NDAA to address this growing pattern of hostility and to protect the constitutionally guaranteed right of religious freedom for our servicemembers and chaplains.

Under section 533, you have been tasked with implementing regulations that carry out the conscience protections passed by Congress. In your testimony you indicated that, you "will comply with all the NDAA directives." As Members of Congress who voted for the inclusion of these protections in the defense policy bill, we are deeply concerned that the Department of

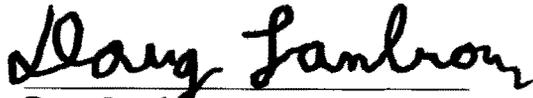


Defense may have consulted with the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, an organization that is focused on silencing religious freedom in the military, regarding policies affecting these religious freedom rights of our nation's servicemembers.

We request the names of all organizations you are consulting in drafting regulations to comply with the NDAA and the date by which you expect to have the regulations protecting conscience protections, as called for under the law, finalized and implemented.

We appreciate your expressed commitment to addressing this matter. Your leadership as Secretary of Defense is vital to protecting religious liberty in our military. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

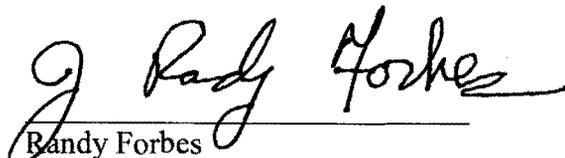
Sincerely,



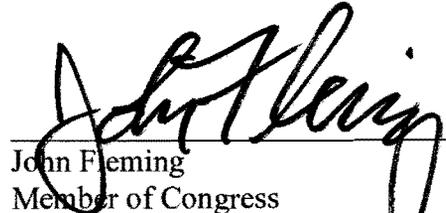
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



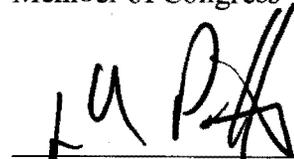
Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



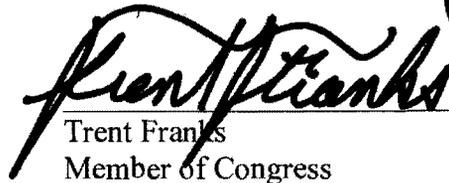
Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



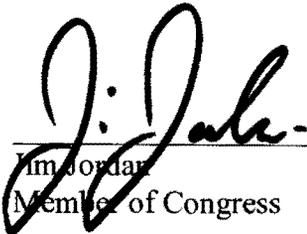
John Fleming
Member of Congress



Joe Pitts
Member of Congress



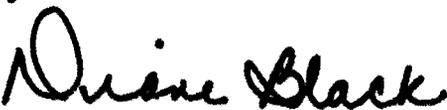
Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Frank Wolf
Member of Congress

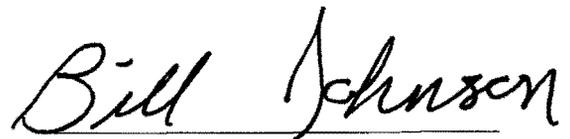


Diane Black
Member of Congress



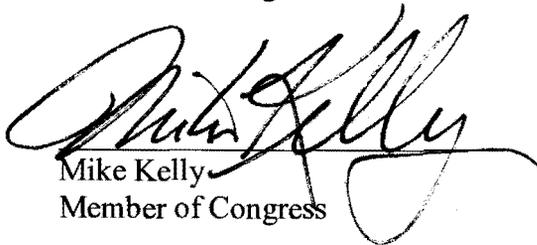
Jack Kingston
Member of Congress


Alan Nunnelee
Member of Congress


Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

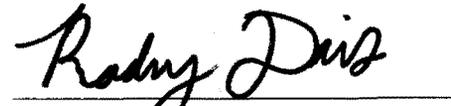

Mo Brooks
Member of Congress


Andy Harris
Member of Congress

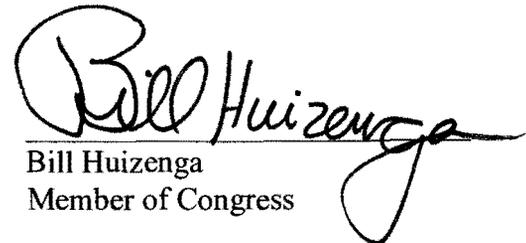

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

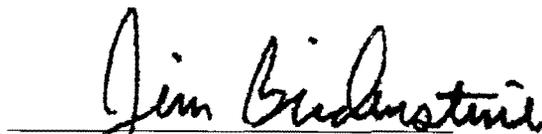

Mark Meadows
Member of Congress


Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress

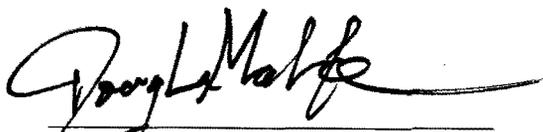

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress


Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress

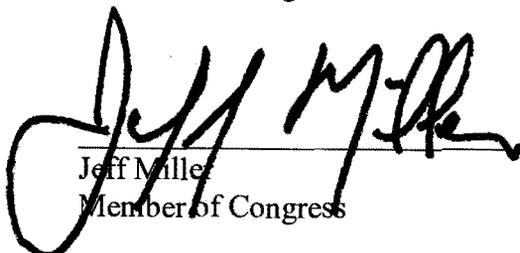

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress


Jim Bridenstine
Member of Congress


Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress


Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress


Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress


Jeff Miller
Member of Congress


Tom Cotton
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones

Walter Jones
Member of Congress

Lynn A. Westmoreland

Lynn Westmoreland
Member of Congress

Michelle Bachmann

Michelle Bachman
Member of Congress

Paul Broun

Paul Broun
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert

Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

John Shimkus

John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Robert Latta

Robert Latta
Member of Congress

Tim Walberg

Tim Walberg
Member of Congress

Rep. Hensarling

Rep Hensarling
Member of Congress

Stevan Pearce

Stevan Pearce
Member of Congress

Ralph M. Hall

Ralph Hall
Member of Congress

John Culberson

John Culberson
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis

Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Joe Barton

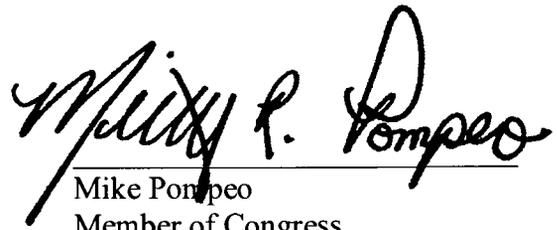
Joe Barton
Member of Congress

Mike McIntyre

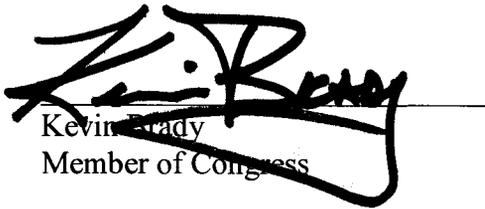
Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress



Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress



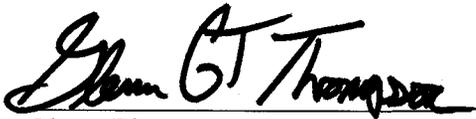
Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress



Kevin Brady
Member of Congress



Steve Daines
Member of Congress



Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



Luke Messer
Member of Congress



Charles Fleischmann
Member of Congress



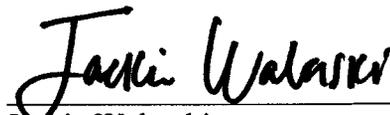
Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



James Lankford
Member of Congress



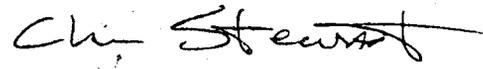
Pete Olson
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Todd Rokita
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
Member of Congress



Scott Garret
Member of Congress



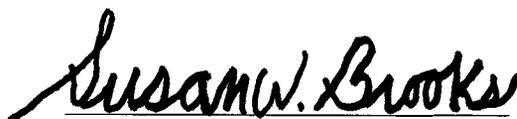
Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress



Stephen Fincher
Member of Congress



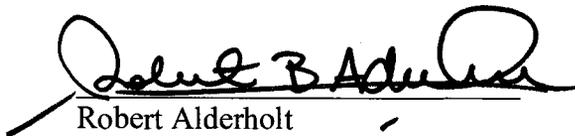
Randy Neugebauer
Member of Congress



Susan Brooks
Member of Congress



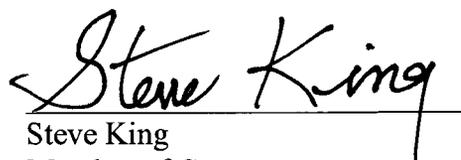
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Robert Alderholt
Member of Congress



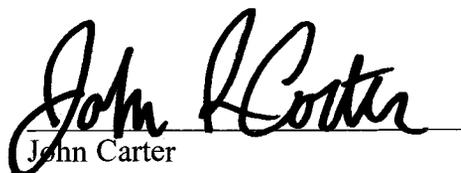
Kevin Kramer
Member of Congress



Steve King
Member of Congress



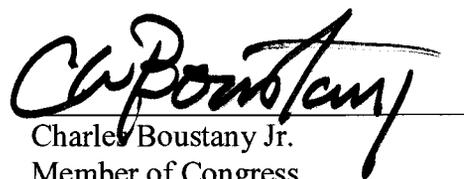
Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



John Carter
Member of Congress



Tim Griffin
Member of Congress



Charles Boustany Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert Wittman
Member of Congress



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



JOHN WALSH
LT. GOVERNOR

June 18, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We appreciate the Department of Defense's continued willingness to engage in ongoing discussions about the Air Force's proposals for the Montana Air National Guard (MANG), and we believe significant progress has been made in identifying a long term mission for our airmen and women at Great Falls.

As outlined in Secretary Donley's letter of May 10, 2013, the long term mission of the Montana Air National Guard at Great Falls will transition from F-15's to C-130H's. The C-130 aircraft will begin to arrive in September 2013 and by the spring of 2014, Great Falls will have received its full assignment of eight aircraft. We appreciate the commitment by the Air Force to provide continued upgrades of airframes and avionics to ensure the relevancy of Montana's C-130 platforms for dual-use missions well into the future.

In order to support this new, certain long-term mission training for our Guardsmen and women, base construction will be required.

To this end, the Air Force has committed that MANG personnel will be given priority of training slots beginning in the third quarter of 2013. Twelve temporary full-time manning, active Guard Reserve authorizations will be granted to assist MANG in training new positions needed to support the C-130 mission. Over the course of the mission transition, MANG will lose no more than 45 full-time positions. The manpower authorization change schedule will not take permanent effect until December 31, 2014, allowing for a gradual decrease in positions.

The hangar modifications necessary to support the transition to the C-130 mission will be funded in fiscal year 2013, and construction will begin as soon as possible and is to be completed by no later than April of 2014. The Air Force has also committed \$22 million to be funded in fiscal year 2014 for construction of new facilities at Great Falls required to support the long-term mission.



OSD007664-13

If we have accurately reflected our agreement, as Commander in Chief of the Montana Army and Air National Guard and Governor of the State of Montana, Governor Bullock approves of this transition plan. Moreover, as described, the plan has the full support of Montana's entire congressional delegation.

If we have not accurately reflected that agreement, please identify where your understanding differs from what we have documented. Also, we would respectfully request to be briefed in early September regarding the progress of the transition. Upon completion of the recent Site Activation Task Force at MANG, we respectfully request a briefing on any issues identified that may impact the progress of the conversion, as well as the final details of the conversion plan.

In closing, we want to again express our appreciation for your service and leadership. It has been a pleasure to work with you, Sec. Donley and your staffs to identify a viable, long-term mission for MANG.

Sincerely,



STEVE BULLOCK
Governor



JON TESTER
United States Senator



MAX BAUCUS
United States Senator



STEVE DAINES
United States Representative