

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

The recent murder of four Marines, a sailor, and the injuring of others in Chattanooga, Tennessee is further, irrefutable evidence that domestic terrorism targeting our stateside troops is real and ongoing. This attack unfolded just four months after the March 26, 2015 arrests of Hasan Rasheed Edmonds, a member of the Illinois National Guard, and his cousin Jonas Marcel Edmonds, for plotting to join ISIS and attack soldiers on U.S. bases. In December 2010, Antonio Martinez was arrested for planning to bomb a military recruiting center in Maryland. In June 2009, Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad was arrested for firing on soldiers in front of a United States military recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas. He killed Private William Long and wounded Private Quinton Ezeagwula.

These examples are beyond the notorious attack by Major Nidal Malik Hasan on November 5, 2009, when the U.S. Army psychiatrist opened fire at a military processing center at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 people and wounding 32 others. There is no reason to believe the risk will mitigate; to the contrary, all facts lead us to believe that the risk of more attacks on our troops is increasing.

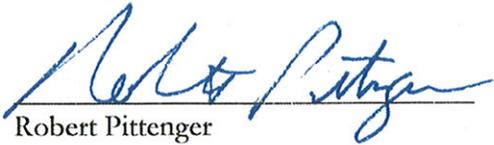
We must not delay in confronting this real and imminent threat. Current Department of Defense regulations, in place since at least 1992, prohibit base commanders from allowing service members to carry personal firearms on military installations. You have the authority to change this directive, and we implore you to do so. Specifically, we ask that you allow the Commanding Officer at each of our military bases and reserve centers to authorize certain personnel to carry personal firearms as a means of enhanced force protection.

Though legislation has been introduced via an amendment to the FY16 National Defense Authorization Act, which makes clear that the Secretary of Defense would empower commanders to enact this policy, you have the discretion and authority to make this important change now.

Our men and women in uniform should have the fundamental right to defend themselves, and their families deserve the peace of mind that all reasonable steps are being taken to ensure that their loved one returns home safely at the end of the day. We believe that the need for you to act on this request is painfully self-evident, and urgent.

We appreciate and thank you for your leadership and your strong advocacy for those who defend and keep our nation free.

Sincerely,



Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress



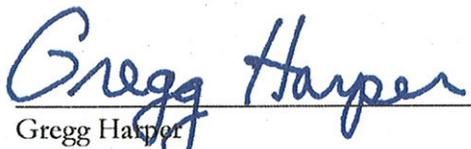
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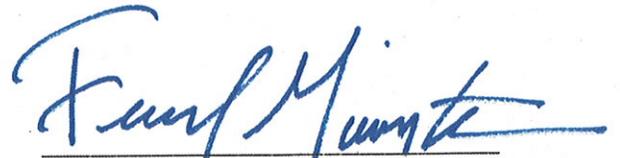
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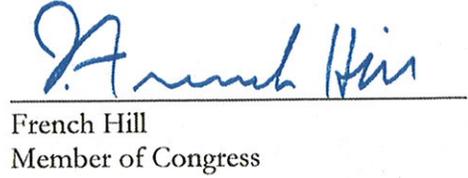
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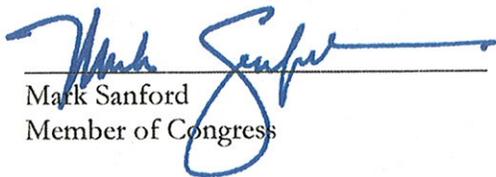
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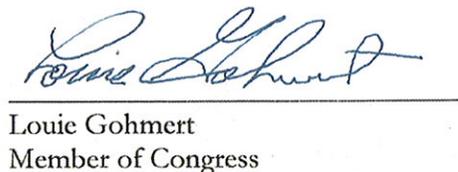


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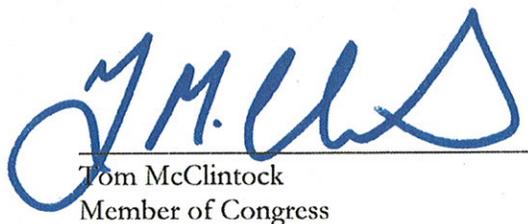

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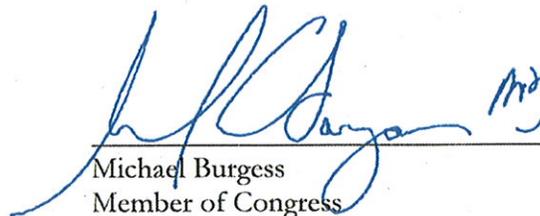

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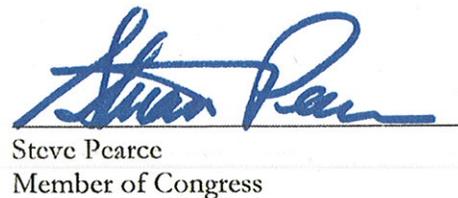

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