

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 16, 2017



The Honorable Elaine C. Duke  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
650 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Acting Secretary Duke,

We request an immediate moratorium on all deportation proceedings involving active duty service members and veterans, and for you to rescind any pending deportation orders against them.

Current immigration law requires the deportation of lawful permanent residents and noncitizens for particular offenses. Many noncitizens serving in the military are unaware that they are subject to deportation if they commit specific crimes, including many nonviolent offenses. As of January 2017, there were more than 10,000 noncitizens serving active duty in the U.S. military and an additional 11,524 noncitizens under reserve status. These men and women put their country first and trust that the military and the government will look after them. It is essential that we help them understand the naturalization benefits they have earned.

The federal government has offered service members access to expedited naturalization for several decades, though many have not become citizens for various reasons. Some have not received the assistance they need to complete the process. While others incorrectly believed their service alone automatically grants them citizenship. Whatever the reason, we must do a better job of informing military members of their naturalization benefits and help them achieve citizenship. We are still in the process of understanding how combat and military service affect our veterans' long-term mental and physical health. We know that suicide, substance abuse, and extreme difficulties reintegrating into civilian life encumber many who have fought for our nation. In trying to understand these consequences, it is incumbent upon us to recognize how Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other service connected disabilities may cause veterans to lash out and otherwise come in contact with our criminal justice system. In addition, we must be looking at solutions to prevent service members from getting to this point through diversion programs and veterans' courts. Until we fully understand and rectify the underlying problems that lead to veterans being deported, we must stop any proceedings that would unjustly see a service member expelled.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



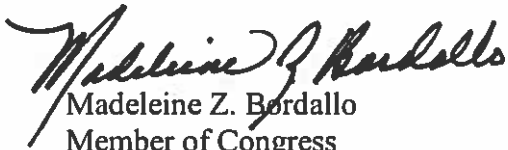
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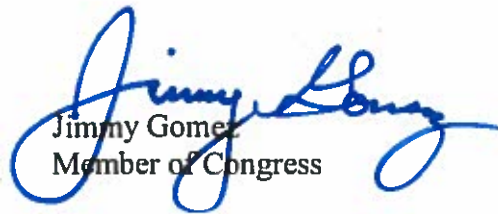
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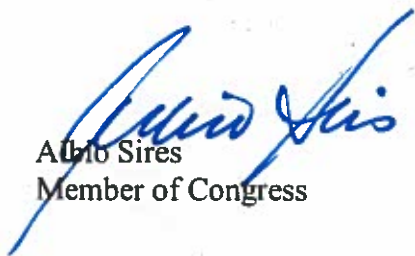
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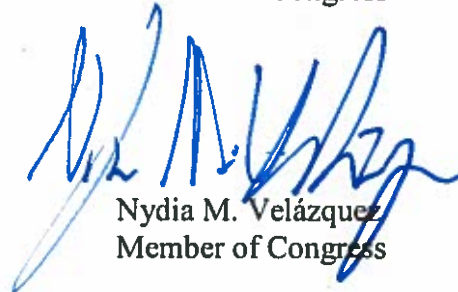
  
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