

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

As the Congress moves to complete action on the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2018, we respectfully request your support for retaining House provision Section 504, *Direct employment pilot program for members of the National Guard and Reserve*. This provision establishes a national pilot program, administered by the Secretary of the Defense, to provide direct job placement and related employment assistance to members of the National Guard and Reserve as well as military spouses and veterans. The provision would provide federal matching funds to state employment programs, which operate at a fraction of the price of similar federal programs, providing a model for the rest of the nation.

As the bill's language states, this pilot program would mirror the success of currently operating direct employment programs—the California, Nevada, and Washington Work for Warriors programs and the Operation Palmetto Employment in South Carolina—which were created to address the disproportionately higher unemployment rates in the National Guard and with military spouses. The programs match qualified, unemployed Guardsmen, Reservists, military spouses, and veterans with open positions in partnering businesses and guide them through the entire résumé, interview, and hiring process. California alone has formed over 500 business partnerships. Since the establishment of these programs, over 12,900 members have been placed into jobs in California and South Carolina and—with a combined total per-placement cost less than one-third of federal employment programs, which typically cost nearly \$3,000 per placement, this provision could save significant taxpayer funds.

The California, Nevada, Washington, and South Carolina programs offer a blueprint for all states to create their own successful, state-run direct employment programs, which can be replicated in the remaining 46 states through this pilot. Similar employment-centric, state-based sister programs are being started in Florida, Indiana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio,

Oregon, Tennessee, Georgia, Kansas, and Vermont, but are also under resourced. This effort is supported by the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA).

Unfortunately, while an amendment was offered to the Senate NDAA by Senators Lindsey Graham and Kamala Harris it was not brought up for consideration and the provision now only exists in the House version of the bill. As you move forward in conference of the two versions of this year's authorization bill, we strongly urge you to include the House-passed pilot program to support the thousands of servicemembers and veterans who have found full-time employment and the thousands more who are in need of assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued work on behalf of the men and women of the Armed Forces.

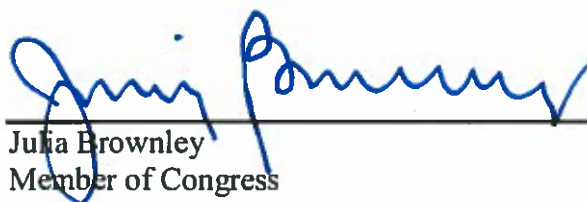
Sincerely,



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Jeff Denham
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Ami Bera
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff
Member of Congress




Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



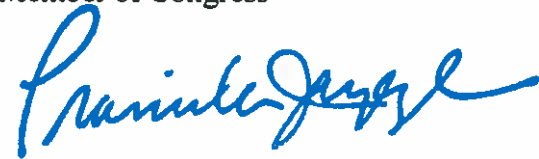
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



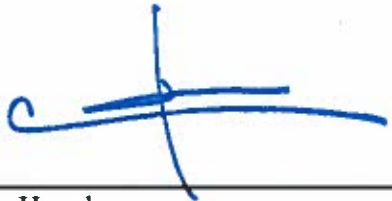
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress




Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress




Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



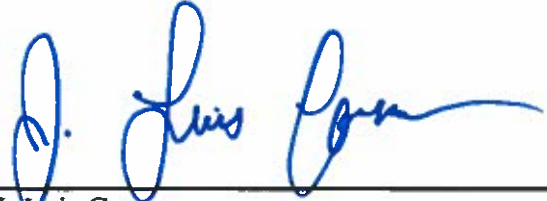
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Roben J. Kihuen
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Scott Peters
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress