

REPUBLICANS

STEVE BUYER, INDIANA, CHAIRMAN

MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, FLORIDA
 TERRY EVERETT, ALABAMA
 CLIFF STEARNS, FLORIDA
 DAN BURTON, INDIANA
 JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
 RICHARD H. BAKER, LOUISIANA
 HENRY E. BROWN, Jr., SOUTH CAROLINA
 JEFF MILLER, FLORIDA
 JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS
 JEB BRADLEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE
 GINNY BROWN-WAITE, FLORIDA
 DEVIN NUNES, CALIFORNIA
 MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO

U.S. House of Representatives**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

335 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

November 16, 2005

DEMOCRATS

LANE EVANS, ILLINOIS, RANKING

BOB FILNER, CALIFORNIA
 LUIS V. GUTIERREZ, ILLINOIS
 CORRINE BROWN, FLORIDA
 VIC SNYDER, ARKANSAS
 MICHAEL H. MICHAUD, MAINE
 STEPHANIE HERSETH, SOUTH DAKOTA
 TED STRICKLAND, OHIO
 DARLENE HOOLEY, OREGON
 SILVESTRE REYES, TEXAS
 SHELLEY BERKLEY, NEVADA
 TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO

Honorable Larry E. Craig
 Chairman
 Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
 Ranking Democratic Member
 Committee on Veterans' Affairs
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Craig and Senator Akaka:

The annual legislative presentations of the veterans' and military service organizations have, for at least five decades, provided the opportunity for senior leaders in veterans' advocacy groups to participate formally in the legislative process and to present their agendas and concerns to our respective committees. We believe that both veterans and taxpayers, as well as the committees, have benefited from the give and take that occurs during these special hearings. We now understand that this useful and longstanding process is in jeopardy.

Representatives of veterans' service organizations approached House Veterans' Affairs Committee Democratic staff and notified us that Chairman Steve Buyer had unilaterally notified the service organizations during a "by-invitation-only" retreat that he intends to discontinue the use of this most useful and transparent of processes for exchanging information regarding the status and effectiveness of veterans' programs. We were not consulted nor even notified in advance of his announcement and strongly oppose this ill-advised action.

Should the Senate decide to preserve the legislative presentations of the veterans' service organizations, we would respectfully ask that you extend the opportunity to participate in these forums to those of us on the House Committee who understand and appreciate their value.

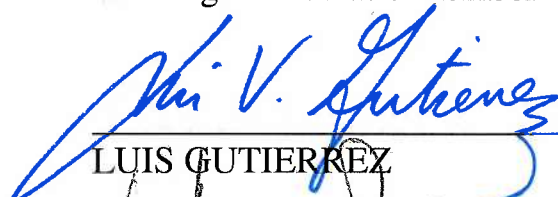
Sincerely,



LANE EVANS
Ranking Democratic Member



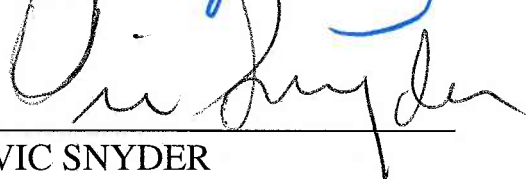
BOB FILNER



LUIS GUTIERREZ



CORRINE BROWN



VIC SNYDER



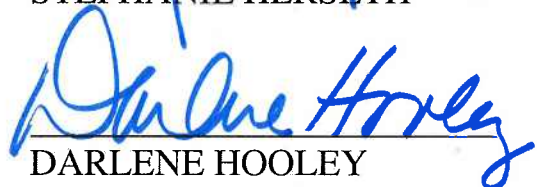
MIKE MICHAUD



STEPHANIE HERSETH



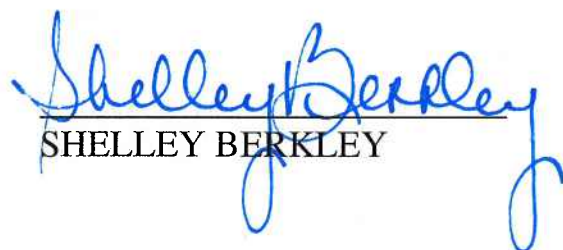
TED STRICKLAND



DARLENE HOOLEY



SILVESTRE REYES



SHELLEY BERKLEY



TOM UDALL