

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

June 19, 2012

Speaker John Boehner  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232, The Capitol  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Leader Nancy Pelosi  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon  
Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Adam Smith  
Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Chairman McKeon, and Ranking Member Smith:

We write as members of the Democratic Caucus concerning the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013. We believe it is critical that Congress provides the Department of Defense with the resources it needs to take care of our service members who are deployed around the world to ensure they can do their jobs and come home safely. But we are gravely concerned with the inclusion of two unnecessary and discriminatory provisions, sections 536 and 537.

As you know, Section 536 of the NDAA would allow military personnel so-called "conscience protections" to speak out against "inappropriate expression(s) of human sexuality" without fear of reprisal. Additionally, Section 537 of the NDAA would require that no military property may be used to "officiate, solemnize, or perform a marriage or marriage-like ceremony, involving anything other than the union of one man with one woman." The presence of these sections in the NDAA stands as a threat to military readiness and unit cohesion, serving to divide our troops and our nation rather than bring us together. These provisions unfairly and unjustly discriminate against a particular class of Americans, and we strongly oppose their inclusion in a final bill.

In anticipation of Senate passage and conference negotiations, we urge that these two provisions be stripped from the final bill.

In light of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", and the recent decision by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling as unconstitutional provisions of the Defense Of Marriage Act, these provisions are particularly troubling. As the process moves forward, this House of Representatives can stand in the way of history, or can stand for all of our service members and against discrimination in any form."

We thank you for your consideration and express our strong interest in seeing these backward provisions removed from the defense bill.

Sincerely,

  
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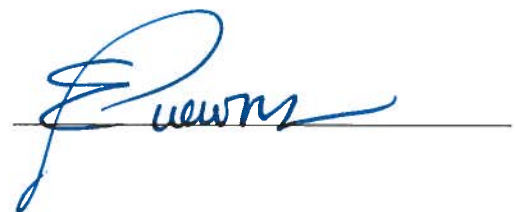
  
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List of Signatories:

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Rep. Tammy Baldwin  
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Rep. Bob Filner  
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Rep. Jim Himes  
Rep. Rush Holt  
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