

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

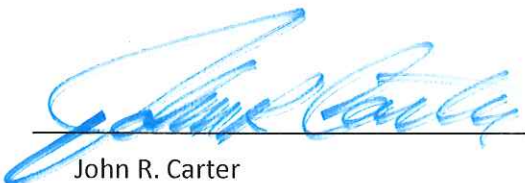
Section 565 (b) of the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act mandates that you submit a report to Congress on your review of the criteria for awarding the Purple Heart no later than 180 days after the law was enacted. We were very disappointed to see you have chosen not to obey the law and have decided to defer the report for a year. Mr. Secretary, this is unacceptable.

The men and women of the 2009 Fort Hood shooting have yet to receive closure and recognition for the tragic event. Almost five years after the attack, we find it absurd that the Department of Defense needs yet another additional year to clarify if the victims are eligible for the Purple Heart. These men and women proudly wore the United States Army uniform and placed their trust in the Army and the Department. Five years after this tragic event the Department of Defense has failed them.

For years we have fought in Congress to take care of the Fort Hood victims and get them the recognition and benefits they deserve. The Department of Defense is only extending the heartache for the victims and families by delaying the report for a year. Moreover, you lack the authority to disregard the statutory deadline and decide on your own what date and form is more appropriate to deliver this report.

Mr. Secretary, simply sending a letter to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and notifying them of the delay in reporting does not exempt you or the Department of Defense from following the law. We ask you to deliver this report on the Purple Heart criteria immediately; it is already beyond its statutory deadline. There is no reason to keep the victims of this tragic attack waiting any longer.

Sincerely,



John R. Carter
Member of Congress



Roger Williams
Member of Congress