

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 25, 2016

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter
U.S. Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

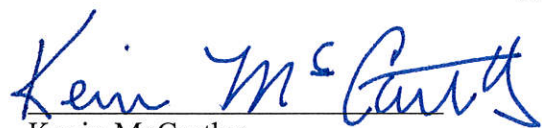
Dear Secretary Carter:

We write to you with grave concern regarding Department of Defense efforts to recover decade-old reenlistment bonuses paid to thousands of California Army National Guard soldiers. We are dismayed that our men and women who answered their country's call to duty are now being forced to repay what was promised to them in exchange for their honorable service. Some have faced the threat of wage garnishments and tax liens if they refuse. This is no way to treat those who have fulfilled their commitments to their country. They should be held harmless in light of the fraud that was perpetrated upon them by overzealous recruiters.

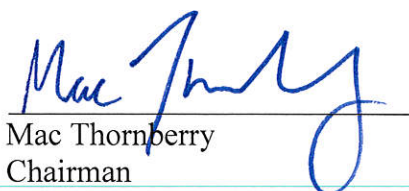
On October 22, 2016, the Los Angeles Times reported that nearly 10,000 soldiers in the California National Guard have been ordered to repay enlistment bonuses of \$15,000 or more. Many of these individuals served multiple combat tours. Wounded Iraq and Afghanistan veteran and former Army Captain Christopher Van Meter was asked to repay a \$25,000 reenlistment bonus. Army Sergeant Robert Richmond, who suffered permanent injuries in Iraq due to a roadside bomb attack, was asked to repay his \$15,000 reenlistment bonus. These are just two examples of the burden that our brave men and women are being asked to bear. It is unjust and this wrong must be righted.

We request that further attempts to retrieve outstanding debt be halted. We are also requesting a comprehensive briefing by the Department of Defense and the National Guard Bureau, specifically focused on what authorities the Department of Defense currently possesses to waive the repayment of these debts as well as a full accounting as to the scope of this issue nation-wide. We look forward to an immediate response. Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue.

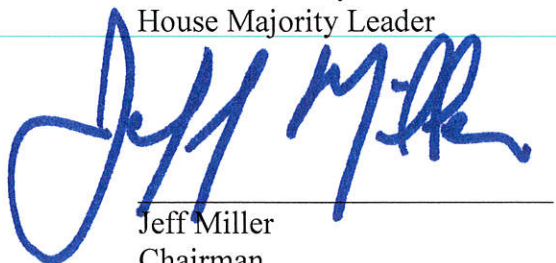
Sincerely,



Kevin McCarthy
House Majority Leader



Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services



Jeff Miller
Chairman
House Veterans Affairs



Ed Royce
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs

Jim Chris

Paul Jones

DeLL

Devin Nunn

Paul Cook

WDL

Elise M. Stanford

Steve Russell

Will Hurd

Erik Paulsen

Jeff Owen

Don Rusk

Ken Cuccinelli

Steph Hill

Tom K

Paul Boyd

Don Ho

Mike Bohan

Doug La Melf

Minia D

Tom