

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In light of the recent events in Afghanistan, we write to request a full briefing on the steps you are taking to identify and treat the increasing number of active-duty servicemen and women struggling under the strain of multiple tours of duty. Our country has been at war for over ten years now and we are starting to see a rise in the number of suicides, mental health ailments, and PTSD among the military community as a result. We would like to know what is being done to address these problems as well as the mental healthcare needs and concerns of our servicemen and women.

According to the Army, more than 107,000 soldiers have been deployed three or more times since September 11, 2001. We are concerned that this has placed a strain on members of the military who have had to endure multiple deployments and multiple tours of duty in dangerous, high-stress combat zones. This is particularly disturbing given the Institute of Medicine study that found that 27 % of those who deployed 3-4 times received diagnoses of depression, anxiety or acute stress compared to 12% of those deployed just once.

In light of this information, we would like an update on the procedures currently in place to identify early instances of stress and trauma in war zones and would like to know what ongoing procedures occur during and after deployments to assess and screen for servicemen and women at risk of developing depression, anxiety, acute stress, or other conditions.

We appreciate your dedicated attention to this matter and look forward to working with you and your staff to find ways to continue to address and resolve these complex issues more effectively and collaboratively. Please contact Pablo Castro in Congresswoman Lee's office at (202) 225-2661 or via e-mail at pablo.castro@mail.house.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress



EDOLPHUS TOWNS
Member of Congress


CHARLES B. RANGEL
Member of Congress

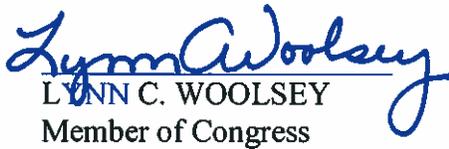

PETE STARK
Member of Congress

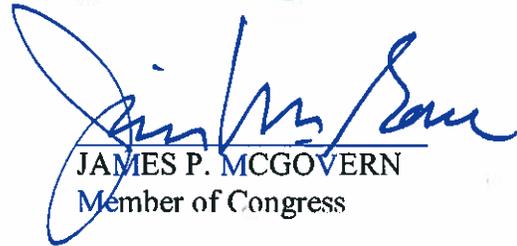

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LYNN C. WOOLSEY
Member of Congress

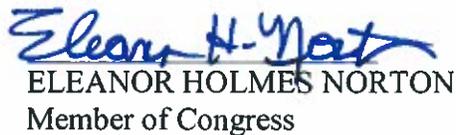

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