

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6050

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairmen Levin and Ranking Member McCain:

We write to ask that you, during the House-Senate conference on the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), recede to the House-passed language in Sec. 662 of H.R. 1540, regarding the treatment of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DoD) who were killed or wounded in the attack that occurred at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009. We also ask that you support the inclusion of language that would provide the same treatment for members of the Armed Forces who were killed or wounded in the similar attack on the military recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas, on June 1, 2009. An amendment to accomplish this, S.Amdt. #1269, was offered by Senators Boozman, Pryor, Cornyn, and Hutchison during Senate floor debate on S. 1867, though it was not considered.

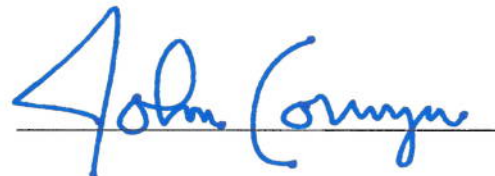
The House-passed version of the NDAA requires that members of the Armed Forces who were killed or injured in the attack on Fort Hood be deemed as killed or wounded in a combat zone, and for civilian employees of DoD to be deemed to have been killed or wounded while serving with the Armed Forces in a contingency operation and in a terrorist attack.

Those killed and wounded in the attack at Fort Hood by homegrown Islamic extremists will not necessarily receive the same benefits as their deployed counterparts who are wounded or killed, merely because this attack took place on U.S. soil, rather than in a declared combat zone such as Afghanistan or Iraq. The provisions that we support would correct this inequity and provide the same treatment, benefits, and honors to the Fort Hood casualties as to those Americans who have been killed or wounded in a combat zone. Furthermore, this action would follow the historic precedent set by the federal government when it awarded casualties of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks who were servicemembers with the Purple Heart medal, and the individuals who were DoD civilian employees with the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom, and that important precedent should be followed for the Fort Hood and Little Rock casualties.

Therefore, we urge the conference committee to include the House-passed provision in the final version of the NDAA and expand it to cover similar events in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sincerely,





Kay Bailey Hutchison
John Rozman

Mark Royce

CC:
The Honorable Buck McKeon
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee