United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 29, 2013

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request that you take direct action and involvement in ending the current Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability claims backlog.

After a decade of war, and despite the VA's efforts to modernize, more than 600,000 veterans are still stuck in the VA's disability claims backlog. While the average wait time for first time disability claims currently ranges between 316 and 327 days, veterans in certain parts of the country are waiting even longer – 681 days in Reno, 642 in New York, 625 in Pittsburgh, 619 in Los Angeles, 612 in Indianapolis, 586 in Houston, and 510 in Philadelphia. In the worst cases, veterans have waited and continue to wait 800 days, 900 days, and even more than 1000 days for a disability claims decision from the VA.

In the last four years, the number of claims pending for over a year has grown by over 2000%, despite a 40% increase in the VA's budget. As a reminder, during this same time period, Congress has given VA everything it has asked for in terms of more funding and more employees; however, this has not eliminated the backlog of claims. Solving this problem is critical for veterans of all generations. We need direct and public involvement from you to establish a clear plan to end the backlog once and for all.

This country must be grateful for the safe homecoming of every single man and woman who has served in harm's way. Our joy at their return must be reflected in our commitment to helping all who have served. We respectfully ask you and your administration to find a solution that ensures that no veterans are stuck in the VA backlog.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Casey, Jr.

Tim Kaine

Mark R Warner

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Angus King

Elizabeth Warren

Joe Donnelly

Jeff Flake

Rand Paul

Jim E Risch

John McCain

Mary Ickes

Pat Toomey

Roy Blunt

Tammy Baldwin

Saxby Chambliss

Michael B. Enzi

Jerry Moran

Jeff Sessions

Mitch McConnell

Mark Begich

Jeanne Shaheen

John Boozman

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Maria Cantwell

Dianne Feinstein

Mike Crapo

Chuck Grassley

Orrin Hatch

Pat Roberts

Frank R. Lautenberg

Debbie Stabenow

Tom Carper

David Vitter

Jeanne Shaheen

Olympia Snowe

Robert Menendez

Johnny Isakson

Jay Rockefeller

Susan Collins

John Cornyn

Ben Cardin

Maggie K Hassan

Ron Wyden

Mike Crapo

Mark Begich

Susan Collins

Heidi Heitkamp

Tom Harkin

Brian Schatz

Bill Nelson

Jim Inhofe

Jon Tester

Richard Blumenthal

Joe Manchin

Harry Reid

Ron Wyden

Roy Blunt

Kelly A. Ayotte