

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 10, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to request that you reconsider what appears to be a recent change to the display of the POW/MIA Flag at the White House and to request that you ensure this display is in accordance with federal law and appropriately honors American prisoners of war (POW) and missing servicemembers.

On November 7, 2019, you signed into law a bipartisan bill that we authored, the *National POW/MIA Flag Act*,<sup>1</sup> which requires the POW/MIA Flag to be displayed whenever the American Flag is displayed on prominent federal properties to honor the more than 81,000 Americans who are listed as Prisoners of War (POW), Missing in Action (MIA), or otherwise unaccounted for from our nation's past wars and conflicts.<sup>2</sup> As a result, both flags are required to be displayed concurrently and every day at certain federal locations, including the White House.<sup>3</sup> Notably, U.S. law regarding the display of the POW/MIA Flag at the White House and other designated federal properties is clear:

“Display of the POW/MIA flag pursuant to this section shall be in a manner designed to ensure visibility to the public.”<sup>4</sup>

In June of this year, the White House appears to have moved the POW/MIA Flag from the top of the White House, just under the American Flag, to a pole on the White House grounds.<sup>5</sup> It has come to our attention that this decision to abruptly move the POW/MIA Flag from atop the White House to an area that is apparently not visible to the public may violate federal law and does not appropriately honor the service and sacrifices of American prisoners of war, missing servicemembers, and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law No. 116-67.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Past Conflicts, <https://www.dpaa.mil/Our-Missing/Past-Conflicts/> (last updated September 4, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Public Law No. 116-67; 36 U.S.C. § 902.

<sup>4</sup> 36 U.S.C. § 902 (f).

<sup>5</sup> The White House, “Under President Trump, the POW/MIA Flag Flies 24/7 at the White House,” June 18, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goh0lMI0zMY>.

The letter and spirit of current U.S. law intend for the POW/MIA Flag to be consistently and prominently displayed, in order to ensure that our country never forgets those servicemembers who have not returned home. Mr. President, we urge you to reconsider your apparent decision to move the POW/MIA Flag from the top of the White House.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Warren  
U.S. Senator

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Margaret Wood Hassan  
U.S. Senator

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Jack Reed  
U.S. Senator