Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2026

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wicker and Chairman Rogers:

We write to you regarding new reports revealing that the Department of Defense (DoD or "the Department") was unprepared and failed to respond appropriately in the aftermath of an Iranian strike on a U.S. military post at Port Shuaiba that killed six service members and injured more than 30 others.[1] We urge you to hold a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing and a House Armed Service Committee (HASC) hearing so that Congress and the public can hear public testimony from DoD leadership about why the Defense Department was not adequately prepared for this attack and from service members and their families about allegations of mistreatment of survivors of the March 1 attack and of families of the fallen.

Several of us wrote to DoD in April 2026 with concerns about its failures to take basic precautions to protect service members from this attack.[2] A survivor indicated that the post "was on a list of potential Iranian targets" and officials with knowledge of the situation reported that before the attack, there were discussions about whether the tactical operations center at Port Shuaiba "should not have been used, as it concentrated too many U.S. troops in a location that wasn't defendable."[3] Despite these concerns, survivors of the attack described how the unit lacked defensive systems to counter drone attacks and how their requests for anti-drone

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[1] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/.

[2] Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Richard Blumenthal, and Mark Kelly to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, April 26, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/letter_from_senator_warren_dems_to_secretary_hegseth_on_service_member_protection_in_operation_epic_fury.pdf; Office of Congressman Pat Ryan, "Following Deadly Attack on U.S. Base in Kuwait that Killed 6 Servicemembers, Congressman Pat Ryan and House Democratic Veterans Demand Secretary Hegseth Investigate Force Protection Failures," press release, April 23, 2026, https://patryan.house.gov/media/press-releases/following-deadly-attack-us-base-kuwait-killed-6-servicemembers-congressman-pat; Office of Congressman Pat Ryan, "ICYMI: Congressman Pat Ryan Demands Accountability from Secretary Hegseth on Port Shuaiba Drone Strike," press release, April 29, 2026, https://patryan.house.gov/media/press-releases/icymi-congressman-pat-ryan-demands-accountability-secretary-hegseth-port.

[3] CBS News, "Army survivors of deadly attack in Kuwait dispute Pentagon's account, say unit 'was unprepared' to defend itself," Jonah Kaplan and Michael Kaplan, April 9, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-war-kuwait-drone-attack-survivors-us-army; CBS News, "Military questioned use of makeshift office space in Kuwait where U.S. troops were killed," James LaPorta, March 3, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-strike-kuwait-officials-question-fortifications.

capabilities were left unfulfilled, with one source concluding that, "We basically had no drone defeat capability."[4]

In its response to our letters raising concerns about these alarming reports, DoD failed to directly answer our questions.[5] We expanded that investigation in July 2026 after the new reports of DoD's failure "to provide adequate medical care to service members injured" in the Port Shuaiba strike.[6] However, DoD has still failed to provide an adequate response to the questions we have raised and has further stonewalled oversight by failing to provide Congress with the results of the Army's investigations into the Port Shuaiba strike despite repeated requests.[7]

And now, a new set of public reports, and allegations reported by whistleblowers to Senator Warren's and Representative Ryan's offices, have raised even more concerns about the lack of appropriate medical care for service members injured in the strike, the treatment of survivors and their families, and the DoD investigation of this attack.[8] These new reports indicate that:

- "There was absolutely no evacuation plan" in the case of an attack on Port Shuaiba.[9]
- Injured survivors of the March 1st strike, who were still suffering from shrapnel wounds, broken bones, perforated eardrums, and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs),[10] faced delays in receiving appropriate care; when they were brought to a military hospital in Germany, they were told by hospital personnel that they could not be admitted for inpatient care because they "had not arrived on a formal medical evacuation flight" and were told "to schedule outpatient appointments [for] weeks later, in April or May."[11]
- Since returning to the United States, multiple soldiers injured in the strike have waited months for appointments, with at least one still unable to secure an appointment months later. [12]
- A whistleblower also informed Senator Warren's and Representative Ryan's offices that families of the fallen were misled about meetings with DoD officials and were told they

[4] *Id*.
[5] Letter from Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs Dane Hughes to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, May 11, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren].
[6] Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Warren, Ryan, Lawmakers Investigate Reports that DoD Failed to Provide Sufficient Care for Service Members Injured in Iranian Strike," press release, July 30, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-ryan-lawmakers-investigate-reports-that-dod-failed-to-provide-sufficient-care-for-service-members-injured-in-iranian-strike/.
[7] [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren].
[8] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/; The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[9] The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[10] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/; The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[11] *Id*.
[12] *Id*.

had been invited to a ceremony instead of a briefing on the deaths of their loved ones; this made it more difficult for the families to come with questions and to be emotionally prepared for such a difficult briefing. The whistleblower – a survivor of the attack – also reported that some Purple Hearts were mailed to survivors and families of the fallen, instead of being presented in a ceremony as required under a DoD policy memorandum signed by Secretary Hegseth.[13]

- According to reports by a survivor to both offices, the service member originally appointed to conduct the investigation into the strike was a public affairs officer under the chain of command of one of the commanders present during the strike. Additionally, the survivor reported that the more senior officer who later took over the investigation was still a lower rank than the commanders of the 103rd Sustainment Command and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, who were both present during the strike.[14] This raises concerns about what protocols were followed in assigning these investigating officers as well as their ability to objectively report the commanders' actions during the strike.

It is critical that Congress gets answers on the failures that led to the attacks, and on the subsequent mistreatment of survivors and families of those killed. We urge you both to hold public hearings to determine why DoD was not properly prepared for this attack and why it has failed to ensure that injured service members get access to the care they need. As the administration continues to ask Congress for more resources for this war, we can no longer afford to wait for DoD to deign when they are going to answer these questions.[15]

Lack of Medical Support Before and After the Strike

Several of us previously raised concerns that ahead of the Port Shuaiba strike, service member requests for increased medical personnel and supplies "were ignored."[16] A survivor believed that one of the service members killed in the strike "could have survived her wounds had there been a doctor, a fixed aid station or more than one ambulance at the post."[17] Another survivor reported

[13] Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Requirement to Formally Present Purple Heart Medals and Valor Decorations," memorandum, September 30, 2025, p. 19, https://media.defense.gov/2025/Sep/30/2003812317/-1/-1/1/SECRETARY-OF-WAR-ANNOUNCED-MEMORANDUMS.PDF.

[14] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/; Army Reserve Command, "IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE: Fallen Heroes," March 3, 2026, https://www.usar.army.mil/News/News-Display/Article/4420517/immediate-press-release-fallen-heroes/.

[15] The New York Times, "Trump Asks Congress for $88 Billion, Mostly for War With Iran," Catie Edmondson, June 24, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/24/us/politics/trump-congress-iran-war-pentagon.html; The Hill, "GOP senators not happy with Trump administration's handling of Iran funding request," Alexander Bolton, August 13, 2026, https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/6026290-gop-senators-iran-funding/.

[16] Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Warren, Ryan, Lawmakers Investigate Reports that DoD Failed to Provide Sufficient Care for Service Members Injured in Iranian Strike," press release, July 30, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-ryan-lawmakers-investigate-reports-that-dod-failed-to-provide-sufficient-care-for-service-members-injured-in-iranian-strike/; CBS News, "Troops say Army ignored request for more medical support before deadly attack on Kuwait base," Michael Kaplan and Jonah Kaplan, May 19, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/troops-army-medical-support-iran-kuwait-attack/.

[17] *Id.*

that "the Army didn't plan for a mass casualty event, and there were never any run-throughs or rehearsals leading up to the start of the Iranian campaign."[18]

But new reporting by *The War Horse* has revealed additional disturbing details: one survivor has said that "[t]here was absolutely no evacuation plan…If someone happened to have keys for a van in their pocket, then we got that van and we loaded soldiers into it."[19] Survivors drove themselves to a hospital located in Kuwait City to get care.[20] They spent a day there and were then sent to safe houses, and a few days later, the most seriously injured troops were evacuated.[21] The soldiers were still suffering from shrapnel wounds, broken bones, perforated eardrums, and TBI symptoms when they arrived in Germany nine days after the attack.[22] However, once they were brought to a military hospital in Germany, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, doctors reportedly told them that since they "had not arrived on a formal medical evacuation flight, they were not being treated as wounded in action" and were instead "told to schedule outpatient appointments weeks later, in April or May."[23] These reported denials run counter to the norm that "the term 'wounded in action' is typically determined by whether troops are wounded by enemy combatants, not by the type of flight they take."[24]

The soldiers also reported that when they finally arrived at Fort Hood in mid-March, they had "gone days without being able to refill prescriptions issued at the hospital in Kuwait."[25] One soldier with a badly injured shoulder described having to rely on Motrin and Tylenol instead and having to "repeatedly…remind medical providers that she had survived a drone strike."[26]

At the end of March, some soldiers moved to Soldier Recovery Units (SRUs), which treat soldiers with complex care needs. The Army reportedly denied the request of some soldiers to stay together at the same SRU during the recovery process, and one survivor struggling with feelings of isolation in the SRU was denied leave to visit her family and told there were no openings for group therapy.[27] After she left the SRU and turned to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for care instead, she faced repeated appointment cancellations and was unable to get referrals for specialty care "because her military medical records had not been transferred into the VA system."[28]

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[18] *Id*.
[19] The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[20] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/.
[21] *Id*.
[22] *Id*.; The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[23] The War Horse, "They Survived an Iran War Drone Attack. Six Months Later, They're Struggling to Get Care," Leah Rosenbaum, August 27, 2026, https://thewarhorse.org/iran-war-wounded-healthcare/.
[24] *Id*.
[25] *Id*.
[26] *Id*.
[27] *Id*.
[28] *Id*.

Multiple survivors also described it taking two or three months for them to secure medical appointments.[29] One Army Reserve colonel said it took two months to arrange a CT scan for his cough, which "showed abnormal tissue growth in his lungs, possibly from inhaling unknown toxic fumes during the blast."[30] A soldier who suffered a TBI in the attack said that it was not until four months after the attack that he was finally able to see a neurologist for the first time.[31] Another soldier discharged from the SRU reported that "he was told his injuries were not severe enough to require complex care, despite a traumatic brain injury, hearing loss, and post-traumatic stress disorder" and that he has since been struggling obtain treatment through the civilian health care system, including still being unable to see a neurologist.[32]

These reports raise serious questions about the Department's lack of preparedness to respond to casualties from the war. It is unacceptable that over six months since the strike, service members injured in the attack are still struggling to get the care they need and have described how "[t]he military sees us as numbers."[33] Congress has a responsibility to conduct oversight into these reports, and both SASC and HASC should hold hearings to get answers from DoD leadership on why injured troops are not getting the care they need.

Treatment of Families in the Aftermath of the Strike

Senator Warren's and Representative Ryan's offices have also heard disturbing allegations about the treatment of surviving families and loved ones of the fallen in the aftermath of the strike, including families being told that they were being invited to a ceremony, instead of to a briefing on the investigation into the deaths of their loved ones. Misleading family members about this nature of this briefing made it more difficult for them to come to the briefing prepared with questions and to be emotionally prepared to be briefed on the deaths of their loved ones.

These new allegations are also particularly galling after reports that families of injured service members were told they were not seriously injured despite having significant injuries and that their loved ones had returned to duty when they had not.[34] This lack of clarity from Army officials can give families incorrect assumptions about their loved ones' health and damages service members' and their families' trust in DoD's ability to take care of troops injured in the line of duty.

Additionally, a survivor has reported to the offices that Purple Hearts for some survivors of the attack or surviving families were mailed to them instead of presenting them in a ceremony. According to a DoD memo signed by Secretary Hegseth, "all Purple Heart medals and valor decorations will be formally presented to the recipient, or their primary next of kin (PNOK) in the case of a posthumous award, in a suitable ceremony that honors the recipient."[35] There is

[29] *Id*.
[30] *Id*.
[31] *Id*.
[32] *Id*.
[33] *Id*.
[34] CBS News, "Wounded soldiers, families accuse Army of downplaying war injuries," Jonah Kaplan and Michael Kaplan, June 24, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/wounded-soldiers-families-accuse-army-downplaying-war-injuries/.

only an exception for this requirement "when the recipient or PNOK requests otherwise."[36] These reports raise questions about whether DoD was following proper protocols to fully honor the sacrifices of all injured service members and the families of the fallen from this attack.

This broader treatment of families of the fallen and injured service members in the aftermath of this attack also comes as the Trump administration has attempted to downplay the deaths and injuries from the war. For example, DoD has classified deaths and injuries of service members since the resumption of strikes against Iran on July 7 as occurring in "Overseas Operations" instead of as part of Operation Epic Fury.[37] It has also failed to disclose injuries and deaths of service members to the public in a timely manner and President Trump has crudely appeared to "attempt to downplay the rising number of fatalities" by comparing the death toll of his war against Iran to other U.S. conflicts in a social media post.[38]

These new reports about the treatment of families and loved ones in the aftermath of the Port Shuaiba strike raise further questions about whether DoD is trying to cover up its failures to prepare for and respond to this attack as the Trump administration continues to deal with the fallout of its unpopular war of choice that has reportedly cost as many as 23 American lives, injured over 820 U.S. troops, uprooted the lives of military families, and raised costs for the American people.[39]

Concerns Regarding the Integrity of the Port Shuaiba Investigation

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[35] Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Requirement to Formally Present Purple Heart Medals and Valor Decorations," memorandum, September 30, 2025, p. 19, https://media.defense.gov/2025/Sep/30/2003812317/-1/-1/1/SECRETARY-OF-WAR-ANNOUNCED-MEMORANDUMS.PDF.

[36] *Id*.

[37] CNN, "Iran war casualty count eclipses 600 as Pentagon quietly changes accounting," Davis Winkle, July 27, 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/07/26/politics/iran-war-casualties; Defense Casualty Analysis System, "U.S. Military Casualties – Overseas Operations (OO) Casualty Summary by Casualty Category," August 27, 2026, https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/conflictCasualties/oo/byCategory.

[38] CNN, "US military slow to disclose Iran war injuries with officials citing security needs," Davis Winkie, July 20, 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/07/20/politics/us-casualties-iran-war; ABC News, "Trump appears to downplay Iran war deaths in social posts comparing them to previous conflicts," Mary Bruce, Nicholas Kerr, and Elise Spenner, July 22, 2026, https://abcnews.com/Politics/trump-appears-downplay-iran-war-deaths-social-posts/story?id=134983380; The Washington Post, "More U.S. troops have died amid Iran war than Pentagon has disclosed publicly," Noah Robertson, Tara Copp, Warren P. Strobel, and Alex Horton, September 18, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/09/18/more-us-troops-have-died-amid-iran-war-than-pentagon-has-disclosed-publicly/.

[39] The New York Times, "Pentagon Withheld Dozens of U.S. Military Injuries in Iran War," Eric Schmitt, July 20, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/20/us/politics/troops-injured-jordan-iran-war.html; The Washington Post, "More U.S. troops have died amid Iran war than Pentagon has disclosed publicly," Noah Robertson, Tara Copp, Warren P. Strobel, and Alex Horton, September 18, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/09/18/more-us-troops-have-died-amid-iran-war-than-pentagon-has-disclosed-publicly/; ABC News, "US marks 6 months of war with Iran. Here's what it means for Americans and what's ahead," Justin Fishel, Michelle Stoddart, Shannon K. Kingston, et al., August 28, 2026, https://abcnews.com/Politics/us-marks-6-months-war-iran-means-americans/story?id=135980363; Defense Casualty Analysis System, "U.S. Military Casualties – Overseas Operations (OO) Casualty Summary by Casualty Category," as of September 21, 2026, https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/conflictCasualties/oo/byCategory; Defense Casualty Analysis System, "U.S. Military Casualties – Operation Epic Fury (OEFU) Wounded in Action," as of September 21, 2026, https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/conflictCasualties/oefu/wounded.

In the aftermath of the Port Shuaiba strike, it was critical that the investigation be completed thoroughly and independently so that the survivors of the strike and the families of these service members and the fallen can trust that it was done properly and appropriately. But according to public reporting, the Commanding General of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, who was present during the strike, "initially appointed a mid-career officer under his command to conduct the review," something that "alarmed some of the unit's soldiers who answered questions from the officer."[40] One soldier expressed concerns that "we are investigating ourselves and found no wrongdoing."[41] While Army Central has claimed that the investigation was later taken over by Army Central and by a more senior officer,[42] a survivor of the strike has also since reported to both offices that the general initially appointed a public affairs officer under his command to conduct the investigation.

Additionally, the survivor reported that the more senior officer who later overtook the investigation was a colonel. We are concerned about whether this individual was senior enough to investigate given that the 103rd Sustainment Command commander and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command commander are both at more senior ranks of brigadier general and major general, respectively.[43] Under Army Regulation 15-6, "In all cases, an IO [investigating officer]…will be senior in rank (by grade or date of rank) to any person whose conduct or performance of duty may be investigated, or against whom adverse findings or recommendations may be made."[44] The only exception is when this is "impracticable because of military exigencies," something that must be noted in the appointment order; however, "[i]nconvenience in obtaining an IO or the unavailability of senior persons within the appointing authority's organization" are not considered exigencies that would justify this exception.[45] We are concerned about why this investigation was originally assigned to someone in the chain of command of officers who could be found responsible for failed leadership and why it was reportedly then assigned to an investigating officer at a rank lower than these commanders. These reports raise questions about what protocols were followed in the decision to assign these officers to conduct this investigation.

Need for Public Transparency and Accountability

We urge you to hold public hearings with DoD leadership before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Armed Services Committee on the reported failures ahead of the strike and in its aftermath. SASC has held hearings with DoD officials to obtain information about DoD's response to attacks on U.S. facilities in the past; in 2013, SASC held a hearing on the 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. Temporary Mission Facility and Annex in Benghazi, Libya, where both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided

[40] The Washington Post, "Survivors of Iranian attack that killed 6 U.S. troops say generals ignored warnings," Tara Copp and Alex Horton, July 12, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/07/12/survivors-iranian-attack-that-killed-6-us-troops-say-generals-ignored-warnings/.
[41] *Id*.
[42] *Id.*
[43] *Id*.
[44] U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 15-6, "Boards, Commissions, and Committees: Procedures for Preliminary Inquiries, Administrative Investigations, and Board of Officers," June 22, 2025, p. 9, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN43931-AR_15-6-000-WEB-1.pdf.
[45] *Id*.

testimony.[46] Holding a hearing on the Port Shuaiba attack would provide DoD a public forum to answer the questions already posed by Congress as well as address additional allegations regarding the treatment of military families, including whether DoD followed appropriate protocols in briefing the families, informing them of the injuries of their loved ones, and awarding medals.

It is unacceptable that President Trump has dragged the U.S. into a reckless war while failing to properly protect our service members from Iranian attacks and to give them the care they need. These are serious allegations and our service members, their families, and the American people deserve answers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress

Tina Smith
United States Senator

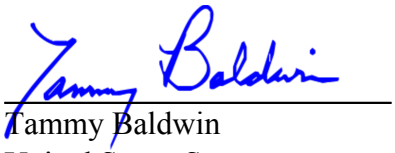
Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

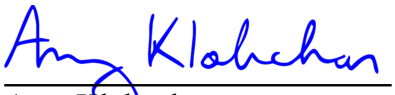
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

[46] U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, "Department of Defense' Response to the Attack on U.S. Facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and the Findings of Its Internal Review Following the Attack," February 7, 2013, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/DODresponsetoBenghaziattack_hearing_020713.pdf.

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



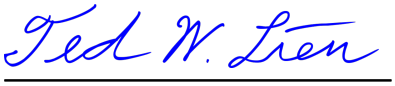
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



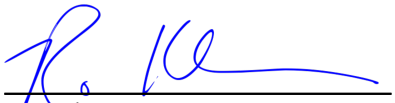
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

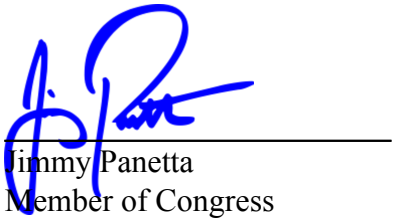
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

Maggie Goodlander
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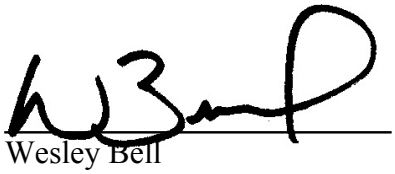
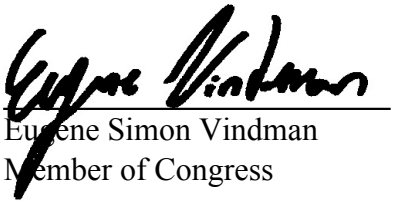
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress