JOE WILSON
2ND DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
CHAIRMAN, PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COUNTIES:
AIKEN
BARNWELL
LEXINGTON
ORANGEBURG*
RICHLAND*
(*PARTS OF)

1 March 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel,

As you step into your new role, you face new challenges. We would like to call your attention to a recent decision that has created substantial controversy.

We have recently learned that the Department of Defense has created the Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM) to recognize extraordinary service that directly impacts combat operations. While we applaud the intent of the medal, we do not agree with placing the DWM above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart in the order of precedent.

The Purple Heart is awarded to service members who are wounded or killed in an action against an enemy of the United States. The Bronze Star may be awarded to a service member for valor or for meritorious service. It is a requirement that the service member be serving in an area designated by the Department as an imminent danger area in order to receive a Bronze Star. No such requirement exists for the DWM. The DWM is intended to recognize extraordinary service that directly impacts combat operations without regard to geographic location. We are supportive of recognizing and rewarding such extraordinary service but in the absence of the service member exposing him or herself to imminent mortal danger, we cannot support the DWM taking precedence above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

The current order of precedence for the DWM is a disservice to Purple Heart recipients who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Country or were wounded while serving in combat. The imminent danger area requirement of the Bronze Star historically means that a service member has been deployed overseas for a military operation involving conflict with an opposing armed force. Our service members who are deployed in support of such military operations are separated from their families for extended periods of time and face the possibility of death or grievous bodily harm. Without any such requirement for the DWM, we also feel it is a disservice to our service members and veterans who have, or who currently are, serving overseas in hostile and austere conditions. We respectfully request that you lower the precedence of the DWM to an appropriate level below the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

We thank you for your consideration on this matter and look forward to an open and positive relationship moving forward.

MIDLANDS OFFICE:
1700 SUNSET BLVD. (US 378), SUITE 1
WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29169
(803) 939-0041
FAX: (803) 939-0078

2229 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4002
(202) 225-2452
FAX: (202) 225-2455
www.joewilson.house.gov

AIKEN OFFICE:
828 RICHLAND AVENUE WEST
SUITE 300
AIKEN, SC 29801
(803) 642-6416
FAX: (803) 642-6418

TOLL FREE 1-888-381-1442

Sincerely,

JOE WILSON
Member of Congress

SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress

RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress

MIKE MCINTYRE
Member of Congress

MIKE TURNER
Member of Congress

ROB ANDREWS
Member of Congress

ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress

MARTHA ROBY
Member of Congress

MADELEINE BORDALLO
Member of Congress

JEFF MILLER
Member of Congress

ROBERT A. BRADY
Member of Congress

FRANK LOBIONDO
Member of Congress

BILL ENYART
Member of Congress

TRENT FRANKS
Member of Congress

TAMMY DUCKWORTH
Member of Congress

MIKE CONAWAY
Member of Congress

TULSI GABBARD
Member of Congress

JOE HECK
Member of Congress

JIM COOPER
Member of Congress

SCOTT RIGELL
Member of Congress

JON RUNYAN
Member of Congress

STEVEN PALAZZO
Member of Congress

KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress

DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress

RODNEY DAVIS
Member of Congress

BILL FLORES
Member of Congress

RICK CRAWFORD
Member of Congress

TIM RYAN
Member of Congress

TOM REED
Member of Congress

PHIL ROE
Member of Congress

VIRGINIA FOXX
Member of Congress

PETE OLSON
Member of Congress

JEFF DUNCAN
Member of Congress

PAUL COOK
Member of Congress

JIM BRIDENSTINE
Member of Congress

KEITH ROTHFUS
Member of Congress

ALAN NUNNELEE
Member of Congress

LYNN WESTMORELAND
Member of Congress

JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.
Member of Congress

CHRIS SMITH
Member of Congress

TIM GRIFFIN
Member of Congress

MICK MULVANEY
Member of Congress

JOHN FLEMING
Member of Congress

COLLEEN HANABUSA
Member of Congress

TIMOTHY J. WALZ
Member of Congress

RON BARBER
Member of Congress

LYNN JENKINS
Member of Congress

LEE TERRY
Member of Congress