

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 7, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Buck McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

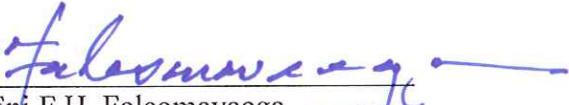
Dear Chairmen Levin and McKeon and Ranking Members McCain and Smith:

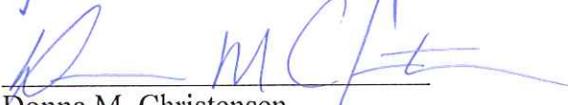
As you begin conference negotiations on the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 (H.R. 4310), we urge you to adopt the provision in the House-passed bill that requires the armed services to display the flags of the District of Columbia and the territories whenever the flags of the 50 states are displayed. The absence of the D.C. and territorial flags at military ceremonies has proven profoundly disrespectful to our constituents, particularly our active duty military, veterans, and their families, who have contacted all of us about feelings of rejection, bordering on humiliation.

Collectively, our constituents have served in every war this country has fought, beginning with the Revolutionary War, and our residents have suffered thousands of casualties on the battlefield while defending this country. We have all individually heard stories directly from our constituents about the deep disappointment they have felt when their home flags were excluded while others were being recognized in military ceremonies. We have searched but can find no reason why the committee should reject the House-passed provision. In the scope of the Pentagon's budget, the cost of purchasing and displaying the flags would be *de minimis*, and our constituents' contributions to the defense of this nation have been invaluable. Moreover, the Army already has an existing policy of displaying all flags, including the flags of the District of Columbia and the territories, and the Department of Defense recently issued a memorandum encouraging all the branches to display the flags of D.C. and the territories.

We ask that you right this wrong and end the unintentional humiliation of our constituents. We therefore request that you include the House-passed provision in the final bill. Thank you for your consideration.

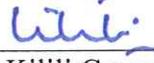
Sincerely,


Eni F.H. Faleomavaega


Donna M. Christensen


Pedro R. Pierluisi


Eleanor Holmes Norton


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

CC: Members of the Conference Committee