

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 9, 2013

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta,

We would like to call to your attention and seek your leadership in implementing a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13 NDAA) that has great significance to the residents of the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. Section 588 is intended to ensure that the armed services display the flags of the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories in the same manner as the flag of a state.

Collectively, our constituents have served in every major U.S. war; many have paid the ultimate price for safeguarding the freedom of our nation. Displaying the flags of our constituents on an equal basis with the flags of the states serves as a small but profound way to recognize the collective efforts of all U.S. citizens, past and present. The amendment was necessitated by servicemembers who served at a variety of installations across the globe yet the flag of their home, either the District of Columbia or the U.S. territories, was not present. Each of the services has a different regulation governing the display of the D.C. and territorial flags. The amendment requires the armed services to adopt a policy that ensures that the flags of D.C. and the territories are always displayed in the same manner as the flags of a state, including in permanent collections and during welcome-home and graduation ceremonies.

Today we urge you to promptly work to implement regulations pursuant to the intent of Section 588 of the FY13 NDAA. The many contributions of military members from the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories are worthy of immediate action regarding this legislation. We appreciate your attention to this correspondence and look forward to seeing our home flags proudly displayed on an equal basis with state flags.

Sincerely,



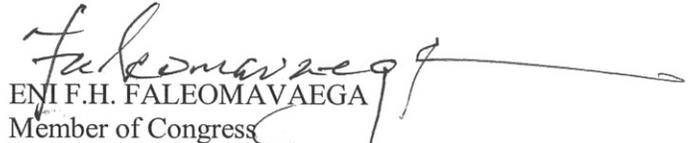
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Member of Congress



ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress



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