

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 14, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It has come to our attention that five “high value” detainees at Guantanamo Bay have petitioned to permanently restrict female service members from assignments related to their detention. We believe these positions should remain open to women, regardless of the religious beliefs of the detainees. Prohibiting women from these assignments discriminates against our troops and allows the enemies of the United States to dictate the terms on which American citizens serve their country. Women in uniform should not have to endure prejudice based on the convictions of enemy combatants, and male soldiers should not be forced to fill these deployments at a higher rate than necessary as a result.

Women have served at Guantanamo Bay since the arrival of the first detainees from Afghanistan in 2002. They have demonstrated the same commitment to their duties as their male counterparts, and numerous other changes have already been made to accommodate the religious beliefs of those currently held at Guantanamo.

While the United States should make certain allowances with respect to human rights, we must not compromise our basic principles at the behest of the very individuals who seek to destroy them. This case exemplifies the continued manipulation of our system to benefit terrorists directly responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent Americans. One of the five detainees, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, is the infamous mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. He was Al Qaeda’s chief propagandist, and continues to support that role through his legal actions at Guantanamo. Attempts to impose Mr. Mohammed’s interpretation of religious law on America’s men and women in uniform must be unequivocally denied.

We ask that you provide Congress with the current policy regarding assignments surrounding detainees at Guantanamo Bay. In your response, outline any changes that have been made to this policy since September 11, 2001. If any policy changes were to accommodate religious or cultural interests, please provide a detailed explanation of the rationale behind those changes. Finally, we impel you to ensure that female service members are not barred from continuing to serve in any capacity due to the requests of those detained for participating in terrorist attacks against the United States.

Our policies reflect our values. We cannot allow our values to be compromised by prohibiting female soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen from certain assignments due to the objections of our enemies. We value all that our women in uniform do and have done to keep our nation safe, and must stand by our principles in this war of ideas.

Sincerely,



**BILL SHUSTER**  
Member of Congress



**MARTHA MCSALLY**  
Member of Congress



**SUSAN DAVIS**  
Member of Congress



**RICK LARSEN**  
Member of Congress



**ADAM SMITH**  
Member of Congress



**STEVE RUSSELL**  
Member of Congress



**DOUG LAMBORN**  
Member of Congress



**RICHARD NUGENT**  
Member of Congress

*Ed Royce*

**ED ROYCE**  
Member of Congress

*D-d Rouzer*

**DAVID ROUZER**  
Member of Congress

*Jackie Walorski*

**JACKIE WALORSKI**  
Member of Congress

*Paul Gosar*

**PAUL GOSAR**  
Member of Congress

*Tim Murphy*

**TIM MURPHY**  
Member of Congress

*Ryan Zinke*

**RYAN ZINKE**  
Member of Congress

*Brian Babin*

**BRIAN BABIN**  
Member of Congress

*David Schweikert*

**DAVID SCHWEIKERT**  
Member of Congress

*Robert Brady*

**ROBERT BRADY**  
Member of Congress

*Lamar Smith*

**LAMAR SMITH**  
Member of Congress

*Madeleine Z Bordallo*

**MADELEINE BORDALLO**

Member of Congress

*Steve Knight*

**STEVE KNIGHT**

Member of Congress

*Candice S. Miller*

**CANDICE MILLER**

Member of Congress

*Jim Langevin*

**JIM LANGEVIN**

Member of Congress

*Trent Kelly*

**TRENT KELLY**

Member of Congress

*Mo Brooks*

**MO BROOKS**

Member of Congress

*Bob Gibbs*

**BOB GIBBS**

Member of Congress

*Lou Barletta*

**LOU BARLETTA**

Member of Congress

*Ryan Costello*

**RYAN COSTELLO**

Member of Congress

*Paul Cook*

**PAUL COOK**

Member of Congress



**BILL JOHNSON**  
Member of Congress



**RICK CRAWFORD**  
Member of Congress



**STEVE PEARCE**  
Member of Congress



**KRISTI NOEM**  
Member of Congress



**CRESENT HARDY**  
Member of Congress



**KEITH ROTHFUS**  
Member of Congress



**REID RIBBLE**  
Member of Congress



**MATT SALMON**  
Member of Congress



**TRENT FRANKS**  
Member of Congress



**TOM MARINO**  
Member of Congress



**MIKE COFFMAN**  
Member of Congress



**DONALD NORCROSS**  
Member of Congress



**DAN BENISHEK**  
Member of Congress



**MIKE KELLY**  
Member of Congress



**BUDDY CARTER**  
Member of Congress