

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 21, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who volunteered to serve this country have courageously answered the call to duty. It is critical that our government fulfill the debt we owe these brave men and women in uniform. With that in mind, we urge you to establish a Special Discharge Review Program to examine administrative discharges where evidence exists that fitness for duty subsequent to honorable service in combat was influenced by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). We also urge you to institute a temporary moratorium on the military's use of personality disorder discharges until the Department of Defense concludes its work of reviewing this issue and adding safeguards to avoid misdiagnoses.

We are concerned over continuing reports from Veterans' Service Organizations, the media, and individual U.S. service personnel who have sought assistance from our offices that the military may be inappropriately and inconsistently applying administrative discharges, such as the personality disorder which presumes a pre-existing condition existed prior to military service. These reports indicate that administrative discharges have been used to discharge expeditiously U.S. service personnel who may in fact have sustained service-connected injuries, such as PTSD or TBI, and therefore should be entitled to medical care and other benefits associated with service-connected injuries. An administrative discharge, such as a personality disorder discharge, can have a particularly devastating effect because it disqualifies an individual for disability benefits, jeopardizes the individual's ability to receive medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and may force the individual to repay thousands of dollars in re-enlistment bonuses.

The establishment of a special discharge review program has proven to be successful in years past. For example, in 1977, under President Carter's direction, the Pentagon established a Special Discharge Review Program which reviewed the records of thousands of veterans discharged with less than honorable discharges in the Vietnam era. The Department of Defense ultimately reviewed the records of over 28,000 veterans and more than 16,000 veterans had their discharges upgraded. The creation of a similar discharge review board today is the proper solution for veterans who may have been similarly aggrieved by DoD discharge policies. We delivered justice in 1977 and we can do so again in 2008.

We are eager to work with the White House and the Pentagon to add needed safeguards to the use of administrative discharges and to create a Special Discharge Review Program. It is our duty to the brave men and women in uniform who have honorably served our country in battle to ensure that any discharge they receive is proper and provides for their subsequent care for all service connected injuries, visible and invisible.


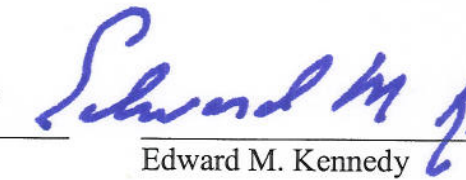
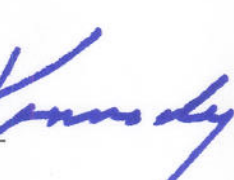
Sincerely,

Christopher S. Bond

Barbara Boxer


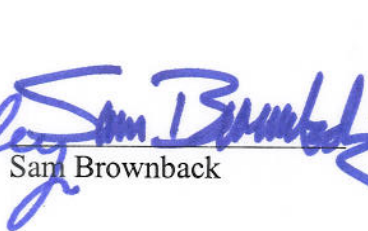

Barack Obama

Claire McCaskill

Thad Cochran

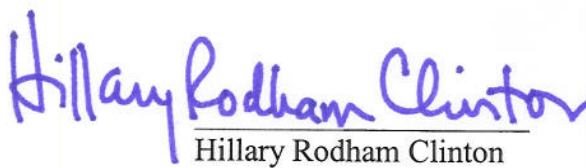
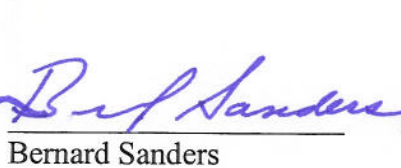
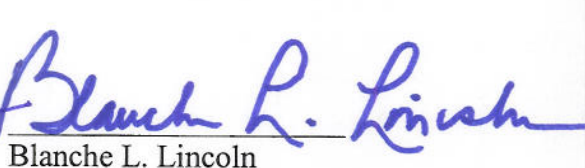
Edward M. Kennedy

Chuck Grassley

Sam Brownback

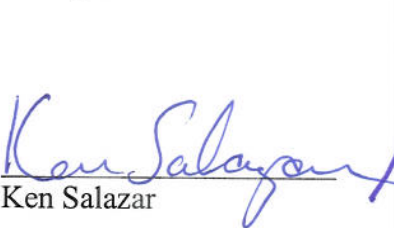
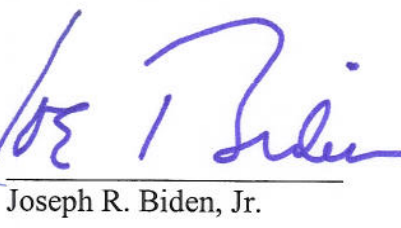
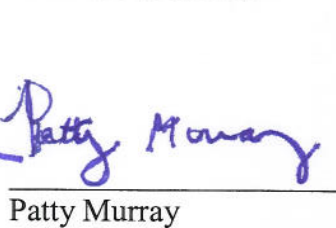
Barbara A. Mikulski

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Bernard Sanders

Blanche L. Lincoln

Ken Salazar

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Patty Murray