CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
117th Congress

November 10, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Mayorkas, Secretary Austin, and Secretary McDonough:

As Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), we are writing to inquire about the status of the interagency Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative (IMMVI), which your departments are leading. The CHC welcomed your announcement earlier this year to launch IMMVI, an initiative to help the noncitizen service members, veterans, and their immediate family members who were affected by this practice.[1] In September of this year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shared additional information on the initiative's goals to increase access to the immigration system, to critical benefits, and to other important services. The IMMVI's objectives are strongly aligned with the CHC's priorities as we believe that those who have served our country, paid for their actions, and who do not pose a threat to our communities, should not be discarded and their cases should be adjudicated within the United States.

The CHC respectfully requests a briefing for our Members on the status of your initiative. Ahead of this briefing, we respectfully request information for our questions outlined below:

1. Please provide an overview of how DHS, the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies are working together to locate deported servicemembers, veterans, and affected family members.
2. What actions are your agencies taking to ensure that this practice does not continue? Are there any new policies being implemented?

[1] https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/biden-deported-veterans-return/2021/07/02/a557285e-db63-11eb-9bbb-37c30dcf9363_story.html

3. According to DOD data, a Government Accountability Office (GAO)[2] report found that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) inconsistently adheres to policies meant to determine veteran status upon detention. How will you ensure compliance with these policies?
4. Is there an expedited process for re-entry for identified deported servicemembers, veterans, and their affected family members? If so, how long is this process expected to take?
5. Upon the return of deported servicemembers, veterans and their family members, what actions are your agencies taking to ensure that these individuals will be able to remain in the U.S. long-term?
6. What can the CHC do to help with this important initiative for our communities?

Assisting the thousands of deported servicemembers, veterans, and their families who have been affected by years of this cruel practice is a top priority for the CHC, and we respectfully request that your departments keep us regularly informed on the progress of your efforts through this important initiative. We stand ready to assist in any way we can to get the job done.

Respectfully,

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Nanette Diaz Barragán
First Vice-Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Adriano Espaillat
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Teresa Leger Fernández
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Salud Carbajal
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J. Luis Correa
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Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress
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[2] GAO-19-416, IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT: Actions Needed to Better Handle, Identify, and Track Cases Involving Veterans

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