

California Legislature



ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

October 24, 2016

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter,

We are writing regarding demands by the U.S. Department of Defense that California service men and women repay enlistment bonuses they received nearly a decade ago.

A 2010 audit by the California National Guard discovered that 9,700 veterans who received reenlistment bonuses in 2006 and 2007 were retroactively denied for this program. Now, 10 years later, the National Guard is demanding that veterans repay these bonuses. Some veterans will have to pay upwards of \$15,000. This could bankrupt thousands of soldiers who have already sacrificed for their country. This is outrageous.

We are calling on the Department of Defense to waive these repayments. Reclaiming reenlistment bonuses punishes soldiers for the failures of government bureaucracy. The men and women who reenlisted made a deal with their government, risked life and limb, and gave an additional six years of their lives to their country. Now the government is renegeing on this deal. This is not right and it is not responsible government.

Bonuses may have been offered in error, but the people who received them did not act in error. The California National Guard and the U.S. Department of Defense need to take responsibility. It is our duty to serve those who served us.

California is home to nearly 200,000 active and reserve service members. We respect their service, and intend to stand by these brave men and women. My colleagues and I will do our part to make sure the soldiers who are receiving these bills are made whole.

We urge the Department of Defense to work with Congress and find a solution to pay back those who have already returned their bonuses, and to find a solution that does not punish those who dutifully served our country.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Chad Mayes.

Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes (AD 42)

Handwritten signature of Travis Allen.

Assemblyman Travis Allen (AD 72)

Handwritten signature of Katcho Achadjian.

Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian (AD 35)

Handwritten signature of Catharine Baker.

Assemblywoman Catharine Baker (AD 16)

Handwritten signature of Frank Bigelow.

Assemblyman Frank Bigelow (AD 5)

Handwritten signature of Eric Linder.

Assemblyman Eric Linder (AD 60)

Handwritten signature of Brian Dahle.

Assemblyman Brian Dahle (AD 1)

Handwritten signature of Brian Maienschien.

Assemblyman Brian Maienschien (AD 77)

Handwritten signature of Rocky Chavez.

Assemblyman Rocky Chavez (AD 76)

Handwritten signature of Devon Mathis.

Assemblyman Devon Mathis (AD 26)

Assemblyman James Gallagher (AD 3)

Assemblyman Jay Obernolte (AD 33)

Assembly Member Melissa Melendez (AD 67)

Assembly Member Marie Waldron (AD 75)

Assemblywoman Kristin Olsen (AD 12)

Assemblyman Brian Jones (AD 71)

Assemblyman Bill Brough (AD 73)

Assemblywoman Young Kim (AD 65)

Assemblywoman Ling Ling Chang (AD 55)

Assemblyman Tom Lackey (AD 36)

Assembly Member Beth Gaines (AD 6)

Assemblyman James Patterson (AD 23)

Assemblywoman Shannon Grove (AD 34)

Assemblyman Marc Steinorth (AD 40)

Assemblyman Matthew Harper (AD 74)

Assemblyman Donald Wagner (AD 68)

Assemblyman Scott Wilk (AD 38)

Assemblyman David Hadley (AD 66)