

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 16, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

We write today to request your assistance in resolving a matter of great inequity affecting some of the finest members of our nation's armed forces. We respectfully request that you take corrective action regarding a disparity relative to eligibility for Montgomery GI education benefits for the First Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry.

The First Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry recently returned from an active duty tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This unit, known as the "Red Bulls," has a history of excellence and bravery that dates back to the Civil War. Just as their comrades who served before them, the members of the 1/34th performed magnificently in their duties in the Middle East consistent with the highest tradition of armed services.

Their deployment kept them in Iraq 30 days longer than any other unit serving as a part of OIF. During their time, they drove over 4,500 round trip convoy missions logging 2.2 million miles of convoys in Iraq. In other areas they fought al-Qaida and provided critical security to our military bases, saving countless lives of their comrades in arms.

Approximately half of the 1/34th BCT, including over 1,200 members from Minnesota, Iowa, New Jersey, North Dakota, Idaho, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Nebraska, have realized that despite their extended service, they are not eligible for the education benefits they deserve. Because of an inexplicable difference in their active duty orders, soldiers who were deployed for the same amount of time to Iraq as many of their comrades are not able to claim Chapter 30 education benefits. In many of the cases, their orders reflect 729 days of service when 730 is the necessary number.

Many of us have been in touch with Secretary of the Army Peter Geren about the issue but unfortunately the Secretary does not have the authority to amend these orders to reflect the true service of these troops. The issue has been referred to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records, but the board has disallowed these affected servicemembers from applying as a group - delaying their prospects for success and jeopardizing their ability to enroll in the 2008 spring semester at colleges and universities across the country.

Because of their extended service and the extreme circumstances involved in their particular case, we ask that you take action, including the issuance of an Executive Order if necessary, to grant the members of the 1/34th Chapter 30 Active Duty GI Bill education benefits immediately. These troops and their families deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,



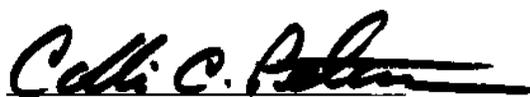
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United States Senate



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate



James L. Oberstar
United States House of Representatives



Collin C. Peterson
United States House of Representatives



Jim Ramstad
United States House of Representatives



Betty McCollum
United States House of Representatives



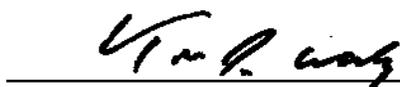
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United States House of Representatives



Michele Bachmann
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Tim Walz
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Chuck Grassley
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United States Senate

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Pat Roberts
Pat Roberts
United States Senate

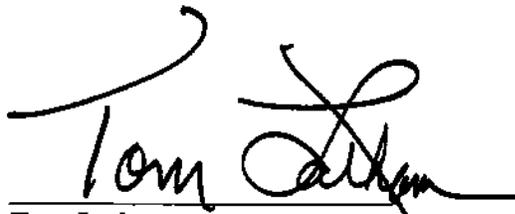
Frank Lautenberg
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United States Senate

Chuck Hagel
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