

Senator James Inhofe
Chair, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Adam Smith
Chair, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Inhofe and Smith and Ranking Members Reed and Thornberry:

The undersigned National Military and Veterans Service Organizations are pleased to support S. 1218 and H.R.2249, the “World War I Valor Medal Review Act,” bipartisan bills sponsored by Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representative French Hill respectively.

This legislation authorizes an investigation to determine if service-members from World War I were potentially and wrongfully denied the Medal of Honor owing to the circumstances of their birth, despite demonstrating extraordinary levels of service and sacrifice as recorded and recognized by different valor awards. This bill would require a review of existing service records for members of the armed forces, specifically minorities, during World War I.

Congress has previously authorized systemic review into minority servicemembers wrongfully denied the Medal of Honor for all American conflicts after 1941, but not for the First World War. This bill rectifies this inequity and would redress the honor denied to African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Jewish-American, and Native-American War veterans. Consideration for the Medal would adhere strictly to criteria established by previously authorized reviews. To be eligible for evaluation, a veteran must have received the Distinguished Service Cross, French Croix de Guerre with Palms, or recommendations for the Medal of Honor.

Our organizations – through the efforts of the Valor Medals Review Task Force – support the fair adjudication of our highest military award for all, which must include our diverse population of service members who have exhibited the commensurate level of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism equal to others who were not denied such recognition. We stand with the Task Force in a common belief that the Medal of Honor should be considered without racial, ethnic, or religious bias.

Your leadership on this issue will help mitigate an iniquitous chapter of our storied military past, and we pledge our full support for its inclusion in the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,


Army Aviation Association of America


AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals

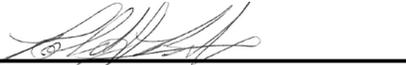

Association of the United States Navy


Commissioned Officers Assn. of the US Public Health Service, Inc


Fleet Reserve Association


Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

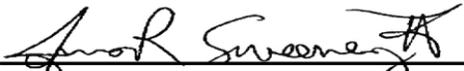

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

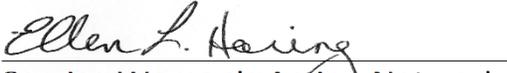

Marine Corps League


Military Officers Association of America

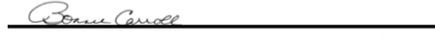

Military Order of the Purple Heart

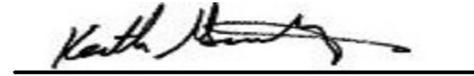

Naval Enlisted Reserve Assn.


Reserve Officers Association

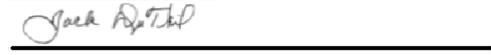

Service Women's Action Network

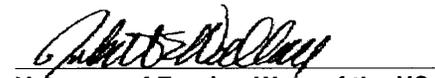

The Military Chaplains Assn. of the USA


Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors


The Retired Enlisted Association


USCG Chief Petty Officers Assn.


US Army Warrant Officers Assn.


Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US


Vietnam Veterans of America


Wounded Warrior Project