

July 22, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Noem, Secretary Collins, and Secretary Hegseth,

We write to express our concern and outrage regarding recent deportations of U.S. military veterans, specifically the most recent case involving a self-deported Army veteran from Hawaii, Sae Joon Park.¹ Despite years of meritorious service in our nation's military and holding a green card, Mr. Park received a removal order due to nonviolent charges from over a decade ago. Mr. Park holds that the charges stemmed from untreated post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) tied to his service to our nation². He resided in the United States for roughly five decades, and his case represents an alarming departure from the previous Administration's support for the overall well-being of our nation's veterans. Mr. Park's case, and the cases of other deported veterans, are a direct result of systemic failures across the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and Defense.

Many noncitizen veterans return from deployment and subsequently live with mental conditions related to their service, including PTSD. This disorder typically triggers issues with substance abuse as a means of escape. Many veterans choose a path of substance abuse to cope with the symptoms of their disorder, which directly stem from their military service. Other issues, such as aggression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide, can plague a veteran upon separation from service, making it urgent for our government to deliver access to timely, quality, comprehensive care.

¹ NPR, *Purple Heart Army veteran self-deports after nearly 50 years in the U.S.* <https://www.npr.org/2025/06/24/g-s1-74036/trump-ice-self-deportation-army-veteran-hawaii>

² Military Times, *Deported Veterans Struggle to Access VA Services, Study Finds.* <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2024/04/15/deported-veterans-struggle-to-access-va-services-study-finds/>

Despite being born in a different country, these veterans who are noncitizens served the United States for the promise our government made of a better future and for believing in our values as a nation. Not everyone who serves in our military is a citizen, and it is shameful to have veterans who have dutifully and honorably served our country continue to fall through the cracks of a broken immigration system. Those who have been deported and exiled from the country they defended not only suffer from the trauma of removal but also face significant challenges and barriers to accessing the benefits they are entitled to under the law. These include, but are not limited to, VA health care, disability benefits, mental health treatment, education, and housing support.

Regardless of the opportunity for expedited naturalization through military service, reports indicate that approximately 94,000 veterans do not have U.S. citizenship.³ Additionally, veterans are due additional reviews, which should consider their military service. Alarming, Sae Joon Park is not the only noncitizen veteran to have our country's promise to him go unfulfilled. Mr. Park had been honorably discharged from the U.S. Army and was awarded a Purple Heart. To be unceremoniously kicked out of his chosen country, one for which he has fought, is not only unconscionable but is an insult to his service and to all veterans.

Increased deportations driven by President Trump's mass deportation agenda and DHS and ICE's increased removal quotas are being executed without the necessary case-by-case review.⁴ We cannot begin to address both the unfulfilled promises made to noncitizen veterans and the challenges deported veterans face until we understand the full scope of the problem and the failures of interagency coordination. Given the clear intersection of responsibility between the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, we request a coordinated response to the following:

1. What is the Administration doing to prevent noncitizen deportations of those who feel compelled to self-deport after serving in the U.S. military?
2. What steps has the Administration taken to ensure coordination between the Department of Veterans Affairs and immigration enforcement agencies to protect noncitizen veterans from removal?
3. Will the Administration commit to facilitating the return of deported or self-deported veterans who meet certain service or discharge requirements?
4. What is the timeline and process for reviewing cases of self-deported veterans seeking return or legal status?
5. Will the Administration commit to continuing the process of expedited naturalizations for eligible service members, according to statute? How many expedited naturalizations have been completed since January 2025?

Our nation's noncitizen veterans have served our country and deserve full access to the benefits they have earned and deserve—anything less is unacceptable. Congress must work with the current Administration to remedy these grave injustices and prevent future unjust deportations from occurring.

³ The Hill, *Deporting Veterans is Nothing to Boast About*. <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/5169188-trump-deporting-veterans/>

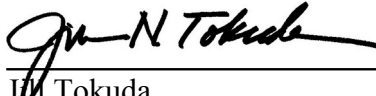
⁴ Ibid.

We are committed to honoring veterans' service with action. We request your prompt and detailed response to the items outlined above no later than **July 25, 2025**.

Sincerely,



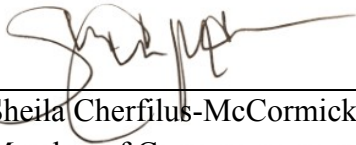
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



JIM Tokuda
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MARK TAKANO
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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Pramila Jayapal
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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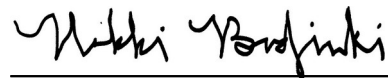
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
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Frederica S. Wilson
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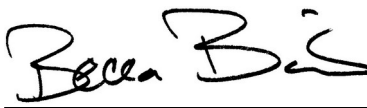
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



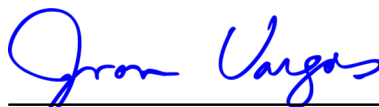
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



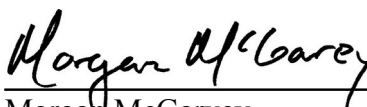
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
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Al Green
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Paul D. Tonko
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Andre Carson
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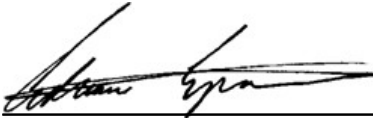
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



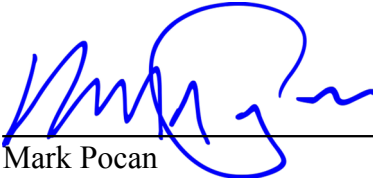
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



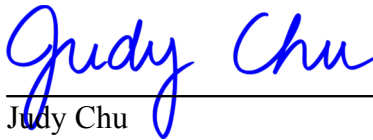
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



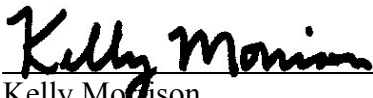
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
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Vicente Gonzalez
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Kelly Morrison
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Dan Goldman
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Lateefah Simon
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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Jim Costa
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Jan Schakowsky
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Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



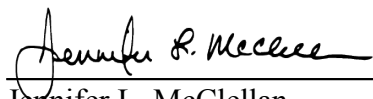
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



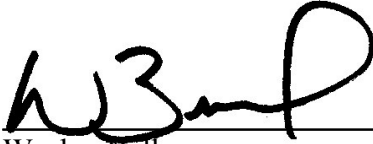
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
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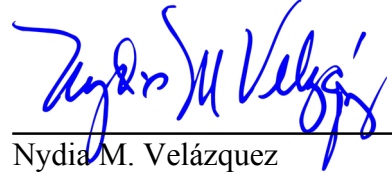
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
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Greg Casar
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Robert J. Menendez
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