

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2013

The Honorable Allison A. Hickey
Under Secretary for Benefits
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Under Secretary Hickey:

We write to follow-up on the discussion during the House Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on May 22, 2013 about the State of California's "Joint Claims Initiative" to help eliminate the veterans' claims backlog. We write to respectfully request the Veterans Benefits Administration provide matching funds for the Joint Claims Initiative.

As you know, there are currently 64,000 claims statewide in California that are considered backlogged. There seem to be particular challenges at the Los Angeles and Oakland regional offices.

Following a model implemented by the Governor of Texas, the State of California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) has proposed helping VA regional offices to fully develop claims. Further, the state would like to establish a CalVet service academy to train county veterans' services officers and veterans' service organization staff on the latest techniques and operating procedures to ensure that claims are fully developed when submitted to VA in an effort to expedite processing and approval of these claims.

Again, we request that the Veterans Benefits Administration provide matching funds for the Joint Claims Initiative. Thank you in advance for your attention to our request.

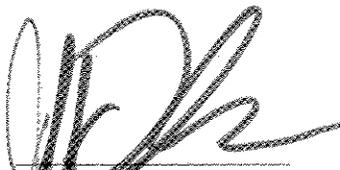
Sincerely,


JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress


MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress


RAUL RUIZ
Member of Congress


PAUL COOK
Member of Congress


JEFF DENHAM
Member of Congress


GLORIA NEGRETE MCLEOD
Member of Congress