

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:

FINANCE

BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

July 21, 2015

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

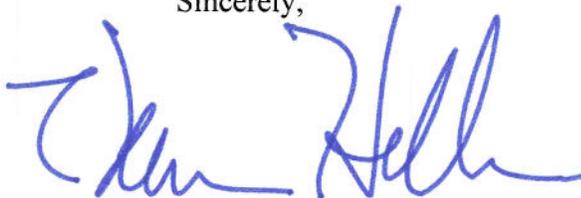
As a supporter of final passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2016, I want to thank you for your leadership on our national defense. As you work to complete a conference report, I respectfully request the inclusion of critical language that I filed as an amendment that would give military base commanders the authority to allow service members to carry personal firearms on base for their personal protection and force protection.

In light of the multiple tragic incidents on military installations in recent years – including the shooting in Chattanooga, Tennessee that took the lives of four Marines and one Sailor – I believe it is past time that Congress address the existing gap in security at military facilities and installations. That is why I filed an amendment (S.Amdt.1513 to H.R.1735) during the Senate's consideration of the NDAA, requiring Department of Defense (DOD) to establish a process for base commanders to authorize service members to carry a concealed personal firearm if the commander determines it to be necessary as a personal protection or force-protection measure.

As you well know, a similar House amendment was included in the House-passed version of the NDAA. I appreciate Chairmen McCain and Thornberry's decisive statements in support of protecting our troops and their commitment to ensuring the final NDAA makes this important clarification related to a post commander's authority. That being said, I encourage all conferees to look at my amendment, along with the language passed by the House, as a reasonable and effective way to move forward on this issue and give our nation's base commanders the authority they need to create a safer environment for our heroes serving across America.

Never should the men and women serving at home have to be afraid that the base they work, and often live, on is not safe. I believe all of us here in Congress want to give these heroes what they need to remain secure and defend themselves. Again, thank you for consideration of this request, and I look forward to working with you to provide for all the needs of our service members who sacrifice every day on our behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean Heller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dean" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Heller".

DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator