

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 23, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to request that you promptly and fully distribute authorized compensation to members of our Armed Forces whose service has been extended by the Department of Defense's stop loss policy.

Over the past seven years, over 160,000 military personnel have had their service duty contracts extended due to stop loss orders. Today, there are over 12,000 soldiers in the active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard who remain on active duty beyond their scheduled separation date as a result of stop loss. This policy especially impacts the National Guard and Reservists, many of whom have already been deployed much longer than they expected. This is why we introduced legislation in the 110th Congress to provide payments to service members for each month they are extended as a result of stop loss.

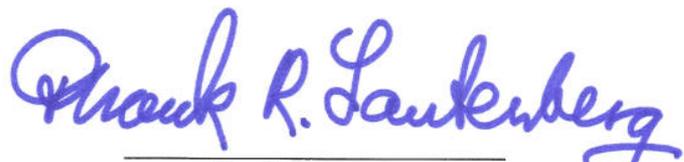
On September 30, 2008, the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 was signed into law (P.L. 110-329). The bill provided that all military personnel that have had their service duty contracts involuntarily extended due to stop loss orders, during Fiscal Year 2009 will receive compensation. The bill also allocated \$72 million for the compensation, thus providing enough to compensate each soldier with the full \$500 amount.

It has been nearly five months since the bill was signed into law and stop loss compensation payments have yet to be distributed. We urge you to work with the House and Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittees to develop a thorough and appropriate disbursement plan as quickly as possible to fulfill the Department's obligations under P.L. 110-329. Our soldiers are heroically and bravely defending our country abroad, and they are awaiting the much-deserved recognition and compensation for the unforeseen sacrifice so many have been called on to perform.

Thank you for your prompt attention and your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,


Betty Sutton


Frank Lautenberg