

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 25, 2006

Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We strongly support the young men and women of our armed forces. Our nation owes them its deepest gratitude for their service to our nation.

It has, therefore, come as a shock to learn from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that there has been a growth of racist extremism in our military. According to the SPLC, military recruiters and commanders have apparently relaxed certain recruitment standards, and the result is that racist extremists are now serving in the armed forces. While there are no firm statistics on this growing phenomenon, we write to ask you to investigate the matter and to take forceful action to remove extremists from the military. We owe our courageous men and women in uniform nothing less.

The current policy of the Department of Defense leaves too much discretion to military recruiters and commanders and is not being strictly enforced. The military should adopt a zero tolerance policy and discharge soldiers who engage in white supremacist activities or who are members of white supremacist groups.

It is also our understanding that the military's own investigators are aware of the dangers. Department of Defense gang detective Scott Barfield has warned SPLC's *Intelligence Report* that Neo-Nazis "stretch across all branches of service, they are linking up across the branches once they're inside, and they are hard-core." He also revealed that there is "Aryan Nations graffiti in Baghdad."

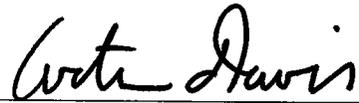
We urge you to implement the recommendations of the Southern Poverty Law Center to adopt a zero tolerance policy when it comes to white supremacy and other forms of racial or religious extremism in the military. Like your predecessors, Secretaries Casper Weinberg and William Perry, who issued similar directives, we urge you to confront this problem head-on by showing no tolerance for ethnic hatred among our service personnel.

Hate group membership and extremist activity are antithetical to the values and mission of our armed forces. We are proud to support the men and women in the military who represent the best America has to offer and know that extremists represent only a radical fringe. Yet, however small, we must stamp out the scourge of racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of hatred wherever they are found. It is our hope that your expeditious action on this matter will help to ensure that our military continues to uphold only the highest principles.

Sincerely,



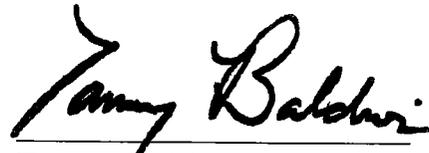
Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



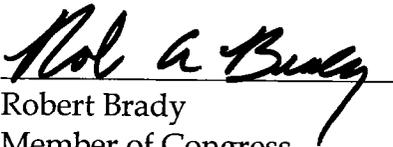
Artur Davis  
Member of Congress



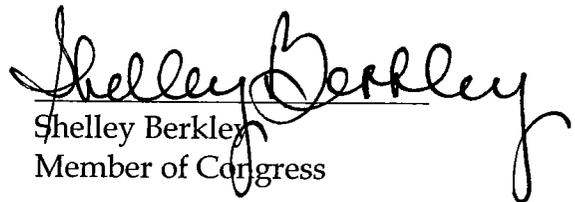
Gary Ackerman  
Member of Congress



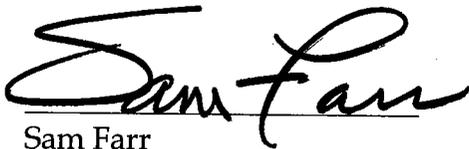
Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress



Robert Brady  
Member of Congress



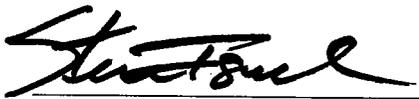
Shelley Berkley  
Member of Congress



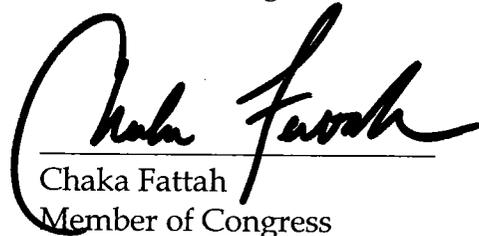
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



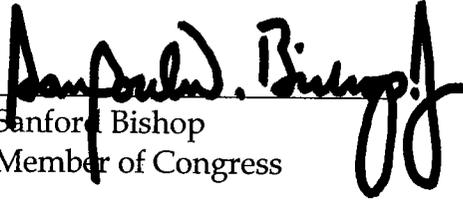
Rahm Emanuel  
Member of Congress



Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



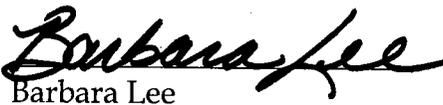
Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress

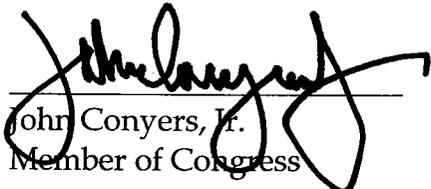
  
Sanford Bishop  
Member of Congress

  
Benjamin Cardin  
Member of Congress

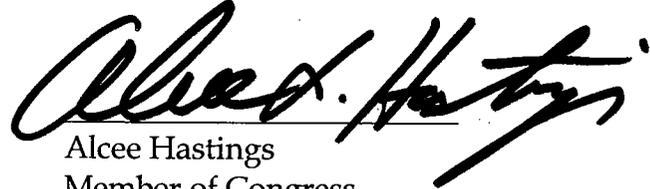
  
Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

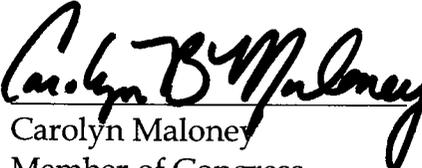
  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

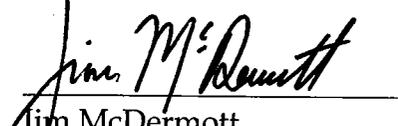
  
Alcee Hastings  
Member of Congress

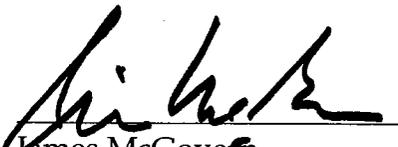
  
Michael Honda  
Member of Congress

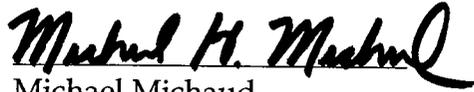
  
Carolyn Kilpatrick  
Member of Congress

  
Tom Lantos  
Member of Congress

  
Carolyn Maloney  
Member of Congress

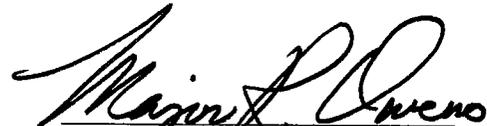
  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

  
James McGovern  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress

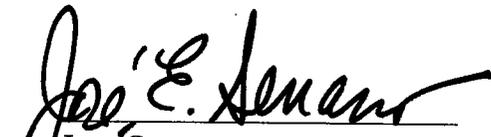
  
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

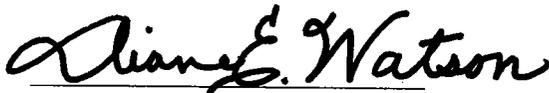
  
Major Owens  
Member of Congress

  
Donald Payne  
Member of Congress

  
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress

  
Jose Serrano  
Member of Congress

  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

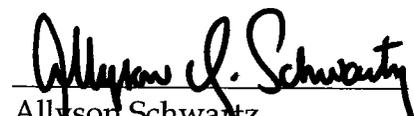
  
Diane Watson  
Member of Congress

  
Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress

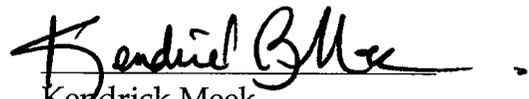
  
Sherrod Brown  
Member of Congress

  
Tom Udall  
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Tim Bishop  
Member of Congress

  
Allyson Schwartz  
Member of Congress

  
Martin Meenan  
Member of Congress

  
Kendrick Meek  
Member of Congress