

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
July 30, 2012

The Honorable Erin Conaton
Under Secretary of Defense
for Personnel and Readiness
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301


Dear Secretary Conaton,

Congratulations on your confirmation. I look forward to working with you and hope you will call on me if I can assist you in your new position.

Recent events, studies, and headlines have indicated a heightened need for more attention to the mental health issues of our returning active duty, guard and reserve personnel. The Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) has taken a leadership role in addressing these needs. CSSP was initially authorized and funded in 2005 to support Guard and Reserve families in addressing unique challenges caused by lengthy troop deployments abroad. The Department of Defense (DOD) funded this program in subsequent fiscal years as well.

On October 21, 2011, I wrote to Deputy Secretary Carter in support of the Citizen Soldier Support Program and the attached memorandum sent by Admiral Mullen to your office on September 27, 2011. Unfortunately, the response I received from your office did not address my request. I wrote in support of the request of the Joint Chiefs and requested the execution of his memorandum. CSSP has been authorized and appropriated by the Congress within DOD. Your office responded to unrelated issues about a miscellaneous proposal sent to DOD from CSSP and further suggested that other parts of government might be more appropriate for their activities. CSSP is part of a larger effort, across the armed forces, that the Chairman clearly recognized would aid our returning soldiers. I was pleased to see that CSSP has garnered such significant support from top military leadership and I encourage your office again to act in accordance with Admiral Mullen's recommendations to provide CSSP with the support they need to continue serving our military servicemen and women.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my views on this important matter. If you have any questions or require further information, please have your staff contact Chris Cannon with my office at 202-224-6342.



Sincerely,

Kay R. Hagan
United States Senator