

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 22, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter:

We were disturbed to learn that the Department of Defense has been sending cease-and-desist letters to veterans groups alleging trademark infringement for their use of official military seals to indicate, celebrate, and honor the various military departments they served. Honoring our nation's veterans should not require veterans' organizations to seek a trademark license from DOD.

For example, the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) received a cease-and-desist letter for their use of official seals that indicated the departments they were honoring on a flyer for their Memorial Day observance - the flyer is enclosed for your review. The UVC also uses these seals on parade banners and other parade materials and has done so for 97 years without issue. It appears that other veterans' organizations have also received such letters.

It is difficult to understand the legal basis, never mind the logic of the DOD threatening any non-profit veterans group with trademark liability for using official seals to honor our nation's veterans.

It is our hope that these prior efforts simply represent a significant error in judgment of lower levels of authority. It is also our understanding that the DOD is currently updating its licensing policy to allow veterans groups to more easily use emblems and other military marks to honor their service.

While this effort to update DOD policies is appreciated, it does not solve the immediate issue of how veterans groups are to replace their banners and other parade materials in time for this year's Veterans Day. In fact, some groups may even have to cancel their parades as they cannot afford or don't have the time to raise more funds for new banners and materials that would comply with the new rules.

Given both the financial and time restrictions before this year's Veterans Day, we ask that you grant a one-time waiver to all non-profit veterans groups to use the official seals of the military branches in upcoming Veterans Day parades or other patriotic events for the remainder of 2015.

We are confident that this will provide a fair solution that allows veterans groups to use their existing materials containing official seals in time for this year's Veterans Day holiday as you determine more veteran organization friendly rules going forward.

Sincerely,

Zoe Ly

Carrie Brown

Rob A Brady

John Layerz.

Judy Chu

Michael Munka

Alan Lowenthal

Phil Sharpson

James J. WI-05

Paul V. Amos

Orman Hunt

Walter B Jones

Barbara Lee

Grace J. Neapolitano

Anna G. Eshoo

Lair Capps

Jim Sensenbrenner

John Garamendi

John Garamendi

Dina Titus

Letter signed by, in order: Reps. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), Corinne Brown (D-Fla.), Mark Amodei (R-Nev.), Bob Brady (D-Pa.), Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), John Conyers (D-Mich.), Walter Jones (R-N.C.), Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Mike Honda (D-Calif.), Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.), Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.), Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), Lois Capps (D-Calif.), Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.), John Garamendi (D-Calif.), and Dina Titus (D-Nev.)