

Dear Mr. Trump,

The foundation of our Republic's freedom was built with the sacrifices of its patriots. Since the days of our founders' fight to form our Union, through the crucible of the Civil War, support of our allies in the World Wars and on today's battlefields, the men and women of America's armed forces have laid down their lives to defend the Constitution and the nation it sustains. Often, the debt is called and lives, regardless of religion, race, or creed, are paid. While we all feel the loss, no one bears the burden more than the families of our fallen. To the military and veterans community, nothing is more sacred or honored than our Gold Star parents. Their personal sacrifice, the loss of a child, is the unimaginable.

This week, when you chose to disparage the family of an American soldier who gave his life in combat, you chose to disparage all of us.

In 2004, Capt. Humayan Khan was killed by a suicide bomber when he rushed forward to protect his soldiers. In his moment of truth, this American soldier demonstrated the highest ideals of our community and our country. Earlier this week, his parents addressed the Democratic National Convention and spoke critically about the dangerous rhetoric of your

presidential campaign. In response to his father's question about your own sacrifices for your country, you compared their loss to your own experiences building a business. Worse, you attacked Ghazala Khan, a Muslim Gold Star mother, for her religion, saying she stood silently by her husband because "she probably wasn't allowed to have anything to say. You tell me."

As you may know by now, her silence had nothing to do with her faith and everything to do with her broken heart. Twelve years after losing her son, she is still unable to see a photo of her son without breaking down. Your statements are unacceptable, especially from someone seeking to serve as Commander in Chief. The Khans' sacrifice has earned them the right to ask hard questions of those seeking elected office.

We are writing as a matter of honor and not as a matter of politics, with no support from any campaign. As Republican, Democrat, and Independent military combat veterans along with Gold Star families, we ask that you demonstrate the character demanded of the office that you seek and apologize for what you've said.

Respectfully,

Ryan Sparks

US Marine
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

James Waters

US Navy SEAL and former Bush
White House staffer
Afghanistan Combat Veteran

Zach Iscol

US Marine
Iraq Combat Veteran

Nate Fick

US Marine, award winning
author, "One Bullet Away"
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Jeffrey Wells

US Navy
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Elliot Ackerman

US Marine, award winning
author "Green on Blue"
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Rye Barcott

US Marine, author "It Happened
on the Way to War"
Iraq Veteran

Doug Beck

US Navy
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Nicki Buntin

Gold Star Widow of US Army
CPT Brian "Bubba" Bunting

Dakota Meyer

US Marine
Medal of Honor Recipient

Gerry Byrne

US Marine
Vietnam Combat Veteran

Philip Caputo

US Marine, award winning
author "A Rumor of War"
Vietnam Combat Veteran

Phil Dismukes

US Air Force F-16 Pilot

Col Greg Douquet

USMC (Ret)
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Mike Hayes

US Navy SEAL
Former Commanding Officer
SEAL Team TWO
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

James Hansen

US Army Special Operations,
Afghanistan Combat Veteran

Ken Harbaugh

US Navy Combat
Reconnaissance Mission
Commander

MajGen TS Jones

USMC (Ret)
Desert Storm and Haiti Veteran

William McNulty

US Marine

Wes Moore

US Army, award winning author,
"The Other Wes Moore."
Afghanistan Combat Veteran

Seth Moulton, D-MA

US Marine and
Member of Congress
Iraq Combat Veteran

Bill and Janet Norwood

Gold Star parents of
Sgt Byron Norwood

Jim Reed

Blue Star father of two soldiers
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Paul Rieckhoff

US Army
Iraq Combat Veteran

Ross Ritchell

US Army Special Operations,
author of "The Knife"
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Dave Silverman

US Navy SEAL
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Wayne Smith

Vietnam Combat Veteran
Founder Vietnam
Veterans of America

Tim Strabbing

US Marine
Iraq Combat Veteran

Marie Tillman

Gold Star widow of US
Army Ranger Pat Tillman

J Kael Weston

Former Department of State,
author, "The Mirror Test"
7 years in Iraq and Afghanistan

Owen West

US Marine
Iraq Combat Veteran

Athena Wickham

Gold Star Widow of US
Army Special Forces
soldier Joseph Curreri

Steve Wisotzki

US Navy SEAL
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Jake Wood

US Marine Scout-Sniper
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Michael Zak

US Marine
Cold War Veteran

Carlos Rivera

US Navy SEAL
Afghanistan and Iraq
Combat Veteran

Tommy Sowers

US Army Special Operations
Iraq Combat Veteran

Phil Carter

US Army
Iraq Veteran

Michael Breen

US Army
Iraq and Afghanistan
Combat Veteran

Frank J. Monterisi, Jr.

US Marine
Afghanistan Combat Veteran

