

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 2, 2006

The Honorable Duncan Hunter, Chairman
The Honorable Ike Skelton, Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515-6035

Dear Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Skelton,

We are writing in strong support of providing enhanced whistleblower protections for all federal employees as part of the final fiscal year 2007 defense authorization bill. Ensuring federal employees that blow the whistle on waste, fraud, and abuse are adequately protected by the law is an important issue that each of us has embraced. In light of recent developments, we believe there is now a real opportunity for Congress to accomplish a significant bi-partisan victory for whistleblowers.

Unfortunately, the current statutory protections for federal whistleblowers have been seriously undermined by a series of activist court decisions by the Federal Circuit ignoring the will of Congress and creating loopholes in the Whistleblowers Protection Act. In fact, since 1999, only two whistleblowers have won decisions on the merits at either the administrative or judicial level.

On June 20, 2006, the Senate by unanimous consent added an amendment offered by Senator Daniel Akaka to the Senate defense authorization bill (S. 2766) meant to address this issue. Many similar reforms were contained in H.R. 1317 which was passed 34 to 1 by the House Government Reform Committee.

Reporting waste, fraud, and abuse within the federal government should not result in harassment, a damaged career, or the loss of income or employment altogether. It is important for potential whistleblowers to feel that, if they come forward, they are truly protected by federal law.

On the surface, whistleblower protection may seem unrelated to defense legislation. However, the Government Reform Committee has been actively working on the issue of whistleblower protections since 2000. The Committee's experience has demonstrated repeatedly that whistleblowers can be America's first line of defense against threats from outside, as well as from bureaucratic breakdowns within the government that can be equally dangerous. Committee investigations and hearings repeatedly have confirmed this conclusion, whether the context was

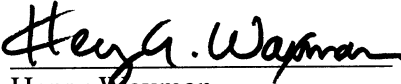
protection of nuclear weapons facilities, disregarded advance warnings about vulnerability to 9/11, failure to upgrade homeland security since that tragedy, or fraud and contracting abusers that have undermined the safety of our troops in Iraq and elsewhere.

Those charged with defending America's families need and deserve the same whistleblower rights as those responsible for defending America's investments. During your conference deliberations, we urge you to include whistleblower protections in any final defense authorization bill and welcome the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,



Tom Davis
Member of Congress



Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



Todd Platts
Member of Congress