

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

February 29, 2012

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Mabus:

We want to commend you for acknowledging the recommendation of Congress, included in the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act, and naming a vessel—a destroyer, in fact—after Marine Corps Sergeant Rafael Peralta.

Growing up in San Diego, California, Sergeant Peralta drew inspiration from the significant Marine presence in the region. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the first available opportunity and deployed to Iraq soon after. Fighting in the second battle of Fallujah, Sergeant Peralta saved the lives of his fellow Marines, at the cost of his own life, when he pulled a grenade into his body and absorbed the blast. For his actions and sacrifice, the Marine Corps, citing multiple eye witness accounts, nominated Sergeant Peralta for the Medal of Honor. A team of specialists later determined that Sergeant Peralta had already been mortally wounded and therefore could not have deliberately pulled the explosive into his body.

Sergeant Peralta was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, even though the Navy Cross citation references the conscious act of reaching for the grenade. The citation states: “Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, Sergeant Peralta reached out and pulled the grenade to his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast and shielding fellow Marines only feet away.” This is an indisputable statement from the Navy that is also consistent with the Marine Corps’ recommendation and eye witness testimony.

Now that Sergeant Peralta is being honored with a destroyer in his name, which is sure to carry his legacy, we urge you to take appropriate action and recommend Sergeant Peralta for the Medal of Honor, relying on the justification presented by the Navy Cross citation, the initial judgment by the Marine Corps and the accounts of the Marines that were present. In the destroyer class, Sergeant Peralta is joining several other notable Medal of Honor recipients, from John Finn, one of the most recent selections, to Jason Dunham, who also used his body to cover a grenade during combat in Iraq. Giving Sergeant Peralta the last measure of recognition he deserves, by awarding him the Medal of Honor, would go a long way towards strengthening the integrity of the awards process. Further, awarding him the Medal of Honor would also translate

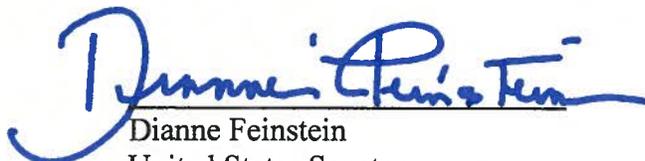
into something meaningful to the Peralta family, the men and women of the Marine Corps, and all others who are committed to honoring the service and sacrifice of America's military.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. It is our hope that you will take action to recommend Sergeant Peralta for the Medal of Honor—an award he truly deserves.

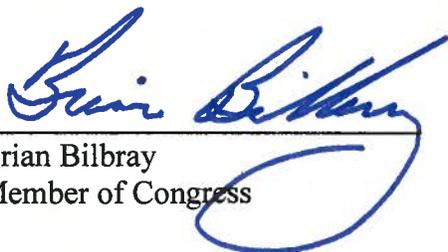
Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Brian Bilbray  
Member of Congress



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress



Bob Filner  
Member of Congress



Susan Davis  
Member of Congress