
CONGRESSMAN LIEU STATEMENT ON ACLU OF CALIFORNIA'S REPORT ON DEPORTED VETERANS

July 6, 2016 | Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON - Today, Congressman Ted W. Lieu (D | Los Angeles County) issued the following statement regarding ACLU of California's report on deportation of Veterans. The statement was delivered by a representative at today's ACLU press conference announcing their report.

Congressman Lieu's Full Statement
ACLU of California Report
Discharged, Then Discarded
July 6, 2016

I want to thank ACLU of California for its ground-breaking report to shine a light on an unconscionable practice in the United States that requires immediate action. As an immigrant and a Veteran who previously served on active duty, I believe there is perhaps no greater injustice in our immigration system than the deportation of Veterans.

The report documents the cases of 84 Veterans who have been unjustly forced out of the country or are facing deportation following their service and highlights the significant consequences. These deported Veterans are often never notified they were eligible to apply for citizenship and, in some cases, are permanently barred from returning. To make matters worse, they often leave behind families. It is simply incomprehensible that we treat some Veterans more like criminals than heroes.

The deportation of Veterans also means we are failing to deliver on our promise to provide for our troops when they leave service. Veterans who need mandatory medical exams in order to process their VA benefits are unable to obtain the necessary exams because they cannot access VA medical care in the United States. My office is currently assisting two Veterans facing this undue burden in arranging for medical care. I am pleased to report that last month one of these Veterans, Hector Barajas, was granted an exam after a three year battle with the VA and Department of State. Mr. Barajas has seen this problem become so widespread that he now runs the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana to assist Veterans facing the same plight.

I am a proud original co-sponsor of HR 5012, the Restoring Respect for Immigrant Service in Uniform Act, a bill to help address this issue. But there is more that can and must be done.

It is a testament to the relentless work of the ACLU on behalf of our nation's Veterans that the report makes a number of concrete recommendations for solutions to the White House, federal agencies and Congress. I look forward to studying the recommendations to Congress and working with the ACLU to develop a path forward. I strongly believe any immigrant, documented or otherwise, who puts their life on the line to serve the United States in uniform should be entitled to their VA benefits and a peaceful life in our great nation.

###

Congressman Ted W. Lieu serves on the House Committees on the Budget and Oversight & Government Reform. He is also the Democratic Freshman Class President and a Colonel in the Air Force Reserves.

LIEU.HOUSE.GOV

Washington, DC
415 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3976

Los Angeles Office
5055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 310
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: (323) 651-1040

Manhattan Beach Office
1600 Rosecrans Ave., 4th Floor
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
Phone: (310) 321-7664