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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
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NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,  
GLOBAL HEALTH, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

June 1, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President:

I write today to express my concern regarding your Statement of Administration Policy on H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I request that you provide clarification on your concerns regarding the awarding of the Purple Heart to the victims of the Little Rock military recruiting station shooting on June 1, 2009, that claimed the life of Private William Andrew Long and injured Private Quinton Ezeagwula.

On June 1, 2009, Private Ezeagwula was wounded and Private Long was killed when they were shot outside of a military recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas. On Monday, July 25, 2011, Abdulhakim Muhammad pled guilty to the charges of capital murder, attempted capital murder, and unlawful discharges of a firearm. He was sentenced to consecutive terms of life in prison without the possibility of parole for the capital murder charge and life in prison on the remaining charges. An additional fifteen years was imposed for use of a firearm in the commission of these felonies.

Muhammad traveled to Yemen where, as he admitted, he consorted with known members of Al Qaeda where he discussed attacks on American military personnel. Muhammad also planned to receive terrorist training in Somalia, and, when he was arrested with a fake Somali passport at a Yemeni roadside checkpoint, he was in possession of videos and literature from Al Qaeda terrorist leaders including American born Anwar Al-Awlaki, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike on September 30, 2011. Muhammad has also repeatedly admitted that he was a soldier in the cause of war, or jihad, against the U.S., and that he targeted Privates Long and Ezeagwula because they wore the uniform of the U.S. Army.

Current U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) regulations allow for the awarding of the Purple Heart to members of our Armed Forces not only as a result of wounds or death in combat, but also for other circumstances. For example, the regulations for awarding a Purple Heart state that members of the Armed Forces who have been killed or wounded "after March 28, 1973, as a result of an international terrorist attack against the United States" shall be eligible for a Purple Heart. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, members of the Armed Forces who were killed or injured during these attacks were awarded the Purple Heart. I believe that Privates Long and Ezeagwula meet this criterion and they deserve the honor of the Purple Heart in recognition of their sacrifice. However, the Army and your Administration continue to deny them this acknowledgement.

President Barack Obama

June 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Specifically, in your statement on H.R. 4310, you object to awarding Privates Long and Ezeagwula with the Purple Heart, stating: "The criminal acts that occurred in Little Rock were tried by the State of Arkansas as violations of the State criminal code rather than as acts of terrorism; as a result, this provision could create appellate issues." It is my understanding that a plea of guilty makes an appeal unlikely and extremely difficult. I am curious as to why awarding the Purple Heart to these soldiers would provide Muhammad with the ability to appeal his convictions. I request that you provide my office with information on the specific appellate issues that awarding the Purple Heart would raise in Muhammad's case to which you refer.

I look forward to hearing your response to my inquiry, and my office contact for this issue is Peter Comstock at [Peter.Comstock@mail.house.gov](mailto:Peter.Comstock@mail.house.gov) or (202) 226-8497. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim", with a large, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

Tim Griffin  
Member of Congress