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April 29, 2008

The Honorable Ciro Rodriguez  
2458 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rodriguez:

Thank you for your leadership on issues of importance to the nearly 60,000 veterans in our region. From your position on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, you have led efforts to reduce the 400,000 claims backlog of veterans waiting for disability and other benefits by adding more than 1,100 new claims processors and supported critical maintenance of Veterans Affairs health care facilities. Our community has greatly benefited from your advocacy.

We are seeking your assistance as we try to ensure that our local veterans receive the highest quality of health care this nation can provide. As you are well aware, a Department of Veterans Affairs internal study on performance standards and health care delivery ranked the El Paso VA clinic among the worst in the nation. Our local veterans experience long wait times or even worse avoid the delays at the clinic and forgo care altogether. It is clear that we must do more for our veterans.

The El Paso County Commissioners request that you contact Secretary Peake and formally request an independent study to assess the needs in El Paso and to suggest ways to improve veterans' health care in our region. The previous assessment conducted by the VA is outdated. Due to BRAC, Fort Bliss will grow by 11,500 troops, making it the largest gainer in military personnel and the Army has announced that they will move additional troops to Fort Bliss over the next several years as we close bases overseas. Fort Bliss is expected to grow by over 20,000 new troops, which means about 60,000 soldiers and family members. An updated assessment of the needs of the veterans in our region is urgently needed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you and ensuring that the veterans in El Paso receive the highest quality of health care possible. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

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April 29, 2008

The Honorable John Cornyn  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

Thank you for your leadership on issues of importance to the nearly 60,000 veterans in our region. You have supported expanded health care for veterans and helped dramatically increase VA health care funding by 34% and VA mental health funding by 27% during the past four years. Our community has greatly benefited from your advocacy.

We are seeking your assistance as we try to ensure that our local veterans receive the highest quality of health care this nation can provide. As you are well aware, a Department of Veterans Affairs internal study on performance standards and health care delivery ranked the El Paso VA clinic among the worst in the nation. Our local veterans experience long wait times or even worse avoid the delays at the clinic and forgo care altogether. It is clear that we must do more for our veterans.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you and ensuring that the veterans in El Paso receive the highest quality of health care possible. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance.

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April 29, 2008

The Honorable Silvestre Reyes  
Chairman  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Reyes:

Thank you for your leadership on issues of importance to the nearly 60,000 veterans in our region. You were instrumental in the development of the State Veteran Nursing Home and continue to bring national leaders to El Paso to participate in the annual Veterans Town Hall meeting. Recently you hosted Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner in El Paso as part of your efforts to address the deficiencies at our local VA clinic. Our community has greatly benefited from your advocacy.

We are seeking your assistance as we try to ensure that our local veterans receive the highest quality of health care this nation can provide. As you are well aware, a Department of Veterans Affairs internal study on performance standards and health care delivery ranked the El Paso VA clinic among the worst in the nation. Our local veterans experience long wait times or even worse avoid the delays at the clinic and forgo care altogether. It is clear that we must do more for our veterans and are pleased to hear that you will soon be hosting VA Secretary Peake in El Paso to provide him with an in depth look at the VA clinic.

The El Paso County Commissioners request that you contact Secretary Peake and formally request an independent study to assess the needs in El Paso and to suggest ways to improve veterans' health care in our region. The previous assessment conducted by the VA is outdated. Due to BRAC, Fort Bliss will grow by 11,500 troops, making it the largest gainer in military personnel and the Army has announced that they will move additional troops to Fort Bliss over the next several years as we close bases overseas. Fort Bliss is expected to grow by over 20,000 new troops, which means about 60,000 soldiers and family members. An updated assessment of the needs of the veterans in our region is urgently needed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you and ensuring that the veterans in El Paso receive the highest quality of health care possible. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance.

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April 29, 2008

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hutchison:

Thank you for your leadership on issues of importance to the nearly 60,000 veterans in our region. As Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and as a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, you have continually demonstrated your commitment to the veterans who have served our nation. Our community has greatly benefited from your advocacy.

In early April, you used a Senate subcommittee hearing to call attention to an internal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report that lists the El Paso VA outpatient clinic among the worst in the country. You also sent a letter to VA Secretary James Peake inquiring about the details of the study and seeking additional information about the VA's plan for health care delivery in El Paso. It is clear that we must do more for our veterans and are pleased to hear that you will soon be hosting VA Secretary Peake in El Paso to provide him with an in depth look at the VA clinic.

We are seeking your assistance as we try to ensure that our local veterans receive the highest quality of health care this nation can provide. The El Paso County Commissioners request that you contact Secretary Peake and formally request an independent study to assess the needs in El Paso and to suggest ways to improve veterans' health care in our region. In December of 2005, you personally made a request to the VA Secretary to have his department conduct a study to examine access to health care for veterans in the Rio Grande Valley. We believe the El Paso region needs a similar assessment.

The previous assessment conducted by the VA is outdated. Due to BRAC, Fort Bliss will grow by 11,500 troops, making it the largest gainer in military personnel and the Army has announced that they will move additional troops to Fort Bliss over the next several years as we close bases overseas. Fort Bliss is expected to grow by over 20,000 new troops, which means about 60,000 soldiers and family members. An updated assessment of the needs of the veterans in our region is urgently needed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you and ensuring that the veterans in El Paso receive the highest quality of health care possible. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance.

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