

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 23, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

On November 15, 2004, Marine Sgt. Rafael Peralta was killed during combat operations in Fallujah, Iraq when he pulled a grenade under his body to protect his comrades. This brave and courageous action is an inspiring testament of his dedication to his fellow Marines and willingness to lay down his life to protect theirs. For his actions, we believe Sgt. Peralta should receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for military valor.

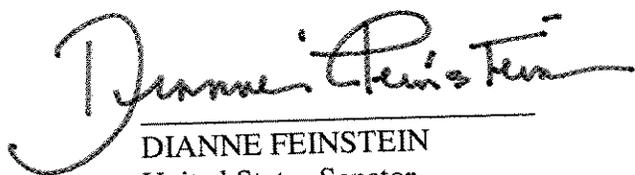
Sgt. Peralta was denied the Medal of Honor despite the strong tradition and precedent for this specific act of bravery, and on September 17, 2008, Sgt. Peralta's family was notified he would posthumously be awarded the Navy Cross. When awarding the Navy Cross to Sgt. Peralta, Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter wrote: "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."

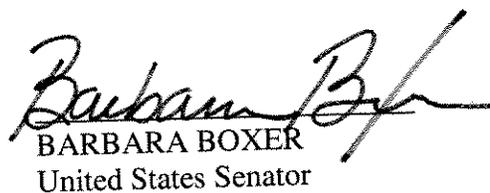
While the Navy Cross has been bestowed on hundreds of brave men and women since World War I, and we in no way wish to denigrate the memory or valor of those who received the award, we feel that Sgt. Peralta's bravery warrants the highest commendation our country can give: the Medal of Honor.

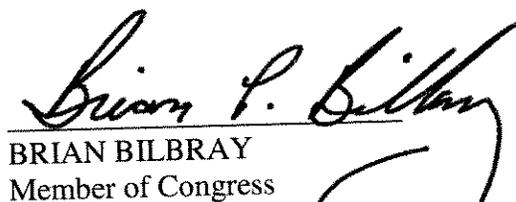
Unfortunately, the Department of Defense rejected our previous attempt to further review Sgt. Peralta's case. We therefore request that a new review of Sgt. Peralta's actions be undertaken by your Administration. We feel that there is no question, based on the facts of the case and the eye-witness testimony of those who served with him on the mission, that Sgt. Rafael Peralta is deserving of the prestigious Medal of Honor. If a new review is not possible, we request that the Administration detail its reasons for this change in precedent for this type of valor in a report to the California delegation.

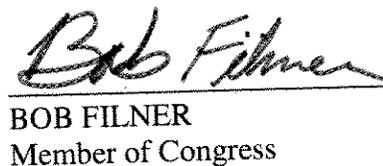
Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure Sgt. Peralta is appropriately honored for his commitment to our nation and valor on behalf of his fellow soldiers.

Sincerely,

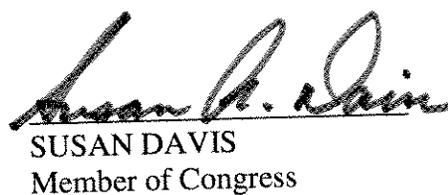

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

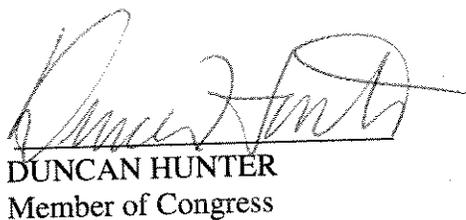

BARBARA BOXER
United States Senator


BRIAN BILBRAY
Member of Congress


BOB FILNER
Member of Congress


DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress


SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress


DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress