

DARRELL ISSA
48TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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March 19, 2024

Chief J. Thomas Manger
United States Capitol Police
119 D Street, NE
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chief Manger,

I write today to express my support for Steve Nikoui, father to Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui, who was arrested at the recent State of the Union address and is now astonishingly facing charges. Mr. Nikoui, a Gold Star father, has endured the unimaginable loss of his son, who was tragically killed at the Abbey Gate bombing during the August 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal. One year later, the Nikoui family suffered an additional heartbreaking loss when Kareem's grieving brother took his own life.

Over the past year, I have had the honor of getting to know Mr. Nikoui. He is a man of kindness and integrity, whose actions are driven by an unwavering love of country and a deep commitment to honoring the memory and sacrifices of his son and the other fallen heroes of Abbey Gate. In August of 2023, I organized a Gold Star forum in my district, providing the first platform for these Gold Star families, including Mr. Nikoui, to share their stories and advance the many questions still left unanswered.

Mr. Nikoui's arrest for emotionally expressing his grief and seeking acknowledgment for his son's sacrifice during the State of the Union – where he called out, "Abbey Gate! Kareem Nikoui! Second Battalion, First Marines!" – highlighted a profound disconnect between the sacrifices made by our service members and the recognition they deserve. Though he interrupted the event, what Mr. Nikoui voiced out loud was a cry for the acknowledgment of the loss endured by the families of the 13 who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

I implore you to review this situation carefully, taking into consideration his profound loss, the context of his actions, and the apparently disproportionate punishment sought for him – but not for others who have similarly disrupted the State of the Union address. I am confident you will find him to be an upstanding citizen filled with love for his nation, integrity, and honor.

You have the authority not to proceed in this matter. I hope you will decide to drop the charges against Mr. Nikoui.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Member of Congress