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October 31, 2016

Mr. Peter Levine  
Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Mr. Levine:

As the member of Congress who represents thousands of Marines and their families stationed at Camp Pendleton, I work on behalf of the service members and veterans in our community. Therefore, I request the California National Guard immediately act to fully reimburse and compensate soldiers who accepted payments in good faith and kept their commitment when they volunteered to protect our country.

In light of recent revelations that unveiled the mismanagement and fraudulent activities of the California National Guard's incentive programs, it would be reasonable to assume that the Guard would expeditiously offer a solution and eliminate the burden placed on military members. In contrast, the Guard has refused to accept wholesale responsibility for their failures, attempted to shift the blame, and offered only bureaucratic indifference, which is unacceptable at best.

I believe in holding both individuals and organizations accountable for their actions. Any person or group that schemes and defrauds the government should face consequences. However, the Department of Defense has acknowledged that the vast majority of service members who received bonus and retention payments accepted the payments in good faith and fulfilled their commitment to serve. Therefore, those individuals should not face hardship as a result of the actions of others.

The Guards' own inept actions and lack of oversight created this debacle. The government has instead forced many of our war-fighters to deplete their life savings, take on more debt by refinancing their homes, and ruined their credit.

You have a duty to make the victims whole without delay, which includes compensation for all applicable interest fees and penalties. As such, the Department of Defense must clear these debts and assist with all service member issues related to invalidate the debts.

If this continues my congressional colleagues and I will act to compel and force you to honor your commitments, just as the soldiers honored theirs. I respectfully request a detailed, substantive, and realistic solution to be delivered promptly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Issa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress