

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta:

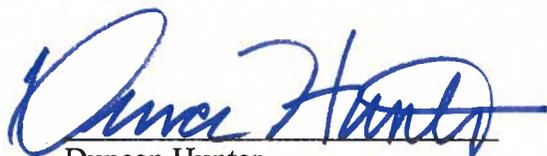
We are writing to inquire about a provision included in the Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 112-81). Section 532 of the law revises the policy on military recruitment and enlistment, calling for equal treatment of graduates of all legally operating secondary schools. As the lead proponents of this change, we feel it will strengthen the military by allowing a new class of patriotic men and women to serve in the armed forces.

We have heard from students in the graduating class of 2012 who have attempted to begin the process of military enlistment and have been denied on the basis of their attendance at an online or virtual school. We recognize that the law provides the Department up to 180 days to fully implement this change, which means a deadline of June 28, 2012. In the interest of guaranteeing the graduating class of 2012 is not unfairly denied the opportunity to serve in the military, or dissuaded from pursuing the option of military service altogether, it is our hope that the Department will expedite implementation of the new policy on recruitment and enlistment for nontraditional students.

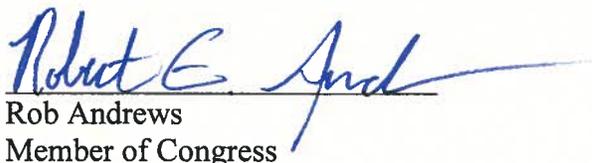
The intent of Congress was to allow class of 2012 graduates to serve, rather than delaying the change until it is too late for the current class of seniors. At a minimum, we urge the Department to provide these students assurances that they can reapply after June 28, or whenever the final changes are implemented. In the absence of a policy change in time for the class of 2012, we want to provide certainty to these graduates so they can know whether to reapply, or look to make other post-graduate plans, such as attending college or finding a job.

We look forward to working with you to identify solutions for implementing the policy change and informing the class of 2012 about how and when to apply for military service.

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



Rob Andrews
Member of Congress