

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

We write to you today to bring a critical safety issue to your attention—the lack of official law enforcement credentials for civilian law enforcement officers employed by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) who protect our military facilities and personnel.

Currently, there are thousands of civilian law enforcement officers around the country who are issued only the DoD Common Access Cards (CAC) without any endorsement or acknowledgement of their law enforcement status. Their official DoD identification is the same as any other DoD employee. For law enforcement officers not to have the proper credentials clearly identifying them as law enforcement raises numerous issues, but the lack of this identification is a critical threat to the safety of these officers.

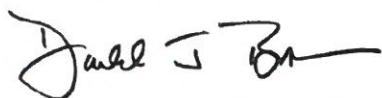
To provide just one example, there are civilian law enforcement officers with the U.S. Department of the Navy (DoN) assigned to the Philadelphia Naval Base Police Department who are not issued proper credentials that identify them as law enforcement officers. The President of the First Federal Fraternal Order of Police Lodge in Philadelphia relayed a potential scenario that was brought to him by one of his members. This officer is extremely concerned that if he is stopped while driving his vehicle to commute to and from work without the proper credentials, there could be potential trouble—given that he will be in possession of agency-issued police equipment and uniforms. This young officer, who happens to be African American, is concerned that without possessing the proper credentials that he can use to identify himself; he has no way of verifying his law enforcement status or explaining why he is in possession of these items. As you would imagine, this scenario could be disastrous, to say the least.

The decision by some DoD components or installation commanders to refuse to issue these Federal law enforcement officers the appropriate credentials make it impossible to clearly identify themselves as law enforcement, and ultimately jeopardizes the safety of these officers and their communities. The DoD should have a uniform policy that all its civilian law enforcement officers have a law enforcement credential.

For this reason, we respectfully request that you direct the appropriate DoD component agencies and departments to take the necessary steps to ensure that all civilian law enforcement officers within DoD are issued credentials or identification cards that clearly identify them as law enforcement officers at no cost to them. The safety of the men and women who are the first line of defense at all our nation's military bases and installations depends on it.

On behalf of our countless constituents protected by these officers, we want to thank you for considering our request in this urgent matter and look forward to your response.

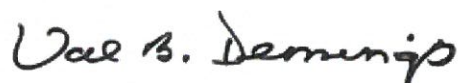
Sincerely,



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress



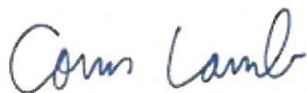
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
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Fred Keller
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Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Elaine Luria
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