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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 7, 2006

President George W. Bush  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We cannot begin to express our concern with regard to the revelation on Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> of the theft of personal information of 26.5 million veterans from the home of a career employee of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Just yesterday, we were informed that nearly all active duty military, National Guard and Reserve members – about 2.2 million total – may also be at risk of identity theft. While this Congress looks forward to working with your administration to find solutions to the systemic problems that led to this situation, we are writing for a more immediate need.

You are undoubtedly aware that a majority of the information compromised contained names, Social Security Numbers and dates of birth of these veterans and service members. This information is the principal data identity thieves require to commit a crime against an individual's financial standing.

With that in mind, Mr. President, we urge you to immediately request emergency funding that would, starting this year, aid those who have been impacted by this data theft. Specifically, we urge you to provide for free credit monitoring for all veterans and military personnel who are at risk of becoming victims of identity theft. In addition, we call on you to provide funding for one additional free credit report per year to each individual affected. Legislation has been introduced in both the House and the Senate that would authorize this spending.

The federal government has a duty to ensure that the financial health of our nation's veterans and military families is not harmed as a result of this most unfortunate event. Any credit reporting assistance provided must not come from previously appropriated or budgeted dollars for the Department of Veterans' Affairs. It is not fair, nor is it right, to risk access to services within the VA because of the theft of personal data.

Sincerely,

  
JOHN T. SALAZAR

  
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