



OCEAN COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE BUREAU
1027 Hooper Ave. Bldg. #2
Toms River, New Jersey 08754

John P. Dorrity MSW, CVA
Director
Telephone
(732) 929-2096
Fax (732) 506-5181
TDD (732) 506-5062

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President;

Sir, I am offering this correspondence to you today in reference to a previous letter that I had sent Governor Jon Corzine and in regard to the commentary with respect to Veterans, recently made by the Department of Homeland Security and its Secretary, Ms. Janet Napolitano.

On April 1, 2009, I sent a letter that I had written to my Governor, Jon Corzine, with respect to his plan to furlough DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) counselors, currently working under the auspices of the New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL), as a budget shortfall economic "hat trick". Mr. President, these individuals are paid by the Federal Government, not the State of New Jersey. There will be NO savings garnered by New Jersey, if this inappropriate action is taken. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, the monies returned to the Federal Government (if that is Governor Corzine's intention) by the way of this political maneuver, would reduce the operating budget of these dedicated public servants in the following FY, therefore equating to layoffs and further lack of service to our Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraq Freedom (OEF/OIF) returnees. Sir, these counselors are all Disabled, also. The current rate of unemployed Veterans in the age group of 18 – 24 is 14.1%. This age group basically translates to OEF/OIF Veterans. The average among the non-Veteran population is 11.6%. These figures represent ALL Veterans who have served our Nation since 9/11/2001. These figures are directly from DOL. Sir, as a VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER with over 27 years of experience, I personally represent nearly 100 OEF/OIF Veterans. On the national level, I have spoken to thousands. Their collective mantra to me is, "we need jobs". My concern is that again, we Veterans represent a larger percentage of the unemployed than our non-Veteran counterparts. I can tell you

personally that when I returned from Vietnam in 1970, although I requested assistance, I received NO help in securing employment from the Federal Government or from the State of New Jersey. The enclosed correspondence to which I allude to has NOT been replied to, other than to tell me verbally that the DVOP's in question present an “**ADMINISTRATIVE INCONVENIENCE**”, and that is the justification of the Governor's proposal. My Commander-in-Chief, as a COMBAT Disabled Veteran myself, **I WILL NOT SINK** to the level of my Governor in illustrating to you the “inconvenience” of COMBAT. Please, Sir, help those of us who truly advocate for ALL Veterans, see that the transgressions of the past, in regard to this important issue, are not again revisited upon citizens who go a step further than most Americans in the Defense of Our Nation.

With respect to the Homeland Security commentary, Sir, I am deeply offended and hurt personally and on behalf of the 68,000 Veterans whom I represent in Ocean County New Jersey, by the Homeland Security assessment of Veterans as *potential terrorists*. Without boring you or your staff, let me tell you a little bit of my family's sense of Nation and the cost of freedom. My Grandfather, Francis X. Leahy served Our Nation HONORABLY and with great distinction prior to World War I (he was an underage enlistee at the time). My Father (who died in a VA hospital), William D. Dorrity, and all his brothers, Joseph and John Dorrity (also died, I believe in VA hospitals in New York) served in COMBAT in World War II, HONORABLY and with great distinction, also. Two of my older brothers, William D. Dorrity III and Joseph P. Dorrity served HONORABLY and with great distinction, in the US Army and US Air Force, respectively, during the Korean War and the Vietnam Era. For my small part, I served in the US Army from 1967 – 1970. I served a tour in Vietnam as a DOOR GUNNER and Crew Chief aboard a UH-1 helicopter in COMBAT operations against the VC and NVA. I served in the 162nd ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY, 13th COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION, 1st AVIATION BRIGADE. During my tour of duty, I lost 19 of my good friends as KIA's. There were probably twice as many WIA's. My son Colin H. Dorrity, served Our Nation in the USMC from 1998 – 2004. He served HONORABLY and with great distinction as he did three (3) tours in Iraq, Kuwait, Africa and other locations of conflict in Southeast Asia. I believe, Mr. President that Secretary Napolitano's affront to the OATH that we all took upon entrance into the military by her agency's assessment, to include my dead and wounded family and friends, is a direct strike on our honor, our integrity and our resolve to follow your orders and die, if necessary in Defense of Our Nation.

In all fairness to this agency, I have not read the text of the memo or whatever official assessment that Homeland Security has produced, on this matter. That being said, the timeliness of this Homeland Security fauz pas, linking patriots to murderers such as Timothy Mc Veigh, is cruel, hurtful and unwarranted. We Vietnam Veterans have gone right back to our misnomers as “baby killers”, misfits, druggies and plain old criminal PROFILE material due to this unfortunate misrepresentation. Sir, let me tell you that I

have heard from many other Veterans, not just we Vietnam Veterans, who feel the same disservice due to the Homeland Security's comments.

You know, Mr. President, I always counted myself as lucky, that in spite of my own POST TRAMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD), I have been able to deal with my problems and have helped tens of thousands of other Veterans and their families over the years. There is a certain amount of solace and contentment in establishing an ability to help others in spite of your own adversity. Hell, I even stopped having continuous nightmares related to my own COMBAT experiences approximately five (5) years ago. Well, Sir, I can tell you that since this Homeland Security memo, assessment or whatever on the anniversary of the Oklahoma City Bombing, I have been having my nightmares again nightly of Vietnam (coincidentally, many other Veterans with PTSD, currently in treatment, are having the same problem). Its okay though, Sir, it's my problem, not yours and I am fortunate that my BROTHERS & SISTERS IN ARMS trust me and believe in me. I will not desert them or denigrate their service in defense of ALL Americans.

In Closing, Mr. President, I would suggest some action on your part with respect to the DVOP issue is warranted. With respect to Homeland Security and Ms. Napolitano's tactless insensitivity, the GREATEST generation, the generations of my own family, and ALL Veterans and currently serving military, who have defended the rights of the protected, will always have my loyalty and personal devotion.

Thank you for your time, devotion and effort you have given to the cause of our beloved country's Disabled Veterans and their families.

Respectfully,

John P. Dorrity MSW, CVA
Director, Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau
President, New Jersey Association of Veterans Service Officers

JPD/ljm

Enclosure: (1)

Cc: Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of VA
Senator Daniel Kahikina, Chairman, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
Representative Bob Filner, Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee