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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3226

September 19, 2011

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

I join a proud nation in recognizing Sergeant Dakota Meyer for the extraordinary valor and courage for which he was recently awarded a much-deserved Medal of Honor. As a staunch supporter of our troops, I thank the men and women of our armed forces for everyday going above and beyond the call of duty to protect our country. It is important that heroes like Sergeant Meyer receive the recognition they have earned.

However, the recent focus on Sergeant Meyer's heroics has renewed questions about the events in Afghanistan's Ganjgal Valley on September 8, 2009. One of the soldiers who lost his life in that battle, Marine Gunnery Sergeant Aaron Kenefick, hailed from Williamsville, New York, in my congressional district. After personally reviewing aspects of the report, I was deeply troubled to find not only that these deaths could have been prevented, but that the incident report states that decisions made by commanding officers "were inadequate and ineffective, contributing directly to the loss of life which ensued."

It is important to Gunnery Sergeant Kenefick's family, the families of the other soldiers who gave their lives that day, and the people of my district that we fully understand the circumstances that lead to these soldiers' deaths, so that no family must endure a similar tragedy. I request that the House Armed Services Committee now hold a hearing on the incidents of September 8, 2009, the resulting investigation, and whether appropriate action was taken in response. Thank you for your consideration of this request and I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Kathleen C. Hochul
Member of Congress