

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
July 28, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

I applaud your swift action in resuming the My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) program after its sudden suspension in February of this year, and appreciate the work the Department of Defense has done to put MyCAA on a sustainable financial footing going forward. However, I am writing to express my concerns with some of the restrictions instituted in the restructured MyCAA program.

As you know, the recently announced restrictions only provide benefits to the spouses of first-term service members, and exclude spouses of service members that have made a career commitment to the military. The exclusion of these military spouses concerns me as they have endured multiple moves and deployments.

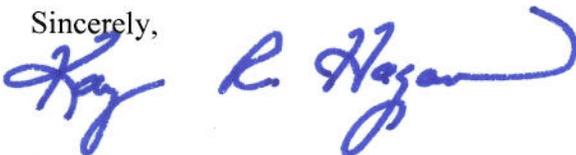
I am also concerned that the restructured program limits new registrants to a maximum of \$4,000 in tuition assistance as opposed to the \$6,000 cap previously instituted. I am also uncertain why the restructured program prohibits the application of benefits towards bachelors or masters degrees despite the fact that many mobile careers such as nursing, teaching, and accounting require them.

I strongly believe that, in authorizing the MyCAA program, Congress intended to provide spouses with support towards transitioning into more portable careers that would reduce disruption during the course of military-directed family relocations. In that respect, I do not believe the restructured MyCAA program is entirely consistent with the program's original intent. I believe the Department's new restrictions and guidelines do not effectively facilitate program goals.

I stand ready to work with you to adjust the implementation guidelines in order to restore the tuition assistance cap to \$6,000, allow for the application of benefits to apply towards bachelors and masters degrees, and ensure the program does not exclude certain military spouses.

Family readiness is a priority of mine, as I know it is of yours. I want to ensure our military personnel and their families have all the support they need. Thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Kay R. Hagan
United States Senator