

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

We write to express our appreciation for your agency's ongoing support for awarding the Medal of Honor to (Captain) Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun and to encourage your official recommendation to the President as the next step in the awards process.

In previous correspondence, our delegation has expressed our resolute support for recognizing Father Kapaun's numerous acts of heroism and selflessness during his service in the Korean War. To that end, our delegation offered legislation in both the House and the Senate to waive the time limitation and award the Medal of Honor to Father Kapaun. In response to our inquiry, Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, later confirmed the Department of Defense's support for the time waiver legislation for Father Kapaun. We are extremely pleased the time waiver legislation was included in the final Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-81).

The next step in the process is for the Secretary of Defense to officially recommend that the President award Father Kapaun the Medal of Honor. We respectfully ask for your support and further request that you convey your recommendation to award the Medal of Honor to Father Kapaun to the President in the near future.

During the Korean War, Father Kapaun served as a chaplain of the 8th Cavalry Regiment of the First Army Division. Amidst the devastating Battle of Unsan, Kapaun pulled wounded soldiers to safety and attended to their injuries. He was taken prisoner along with other American soldiers and carried severely injured fellow soldiers on his back, while rallying others to help in a similar fashion. While in the prison camp he served his comrades by escaping to steal food from nearby farms to bring back to the starving prisoners. He cared for sick soldiers, washed them, shared his food with them, and inspired them with his unflinching faith and acts of generosity until his death in May 1951. Fellow soldiers who benefitted from or witnessed the many examples of Father Kapaun's service shared the stories of his heroism after their release.

It is our strong belief that these acts of selfless service on behalf of his fellow soldiers make Father Kapaun a true hero who deserves this high honor. We appreciate your time and attention to this matter and stand ready to assist in any way required.

With every best wish,



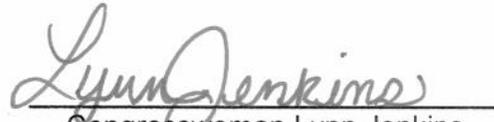
Senator Pat Roberts



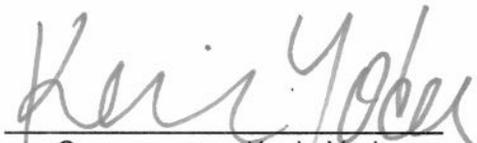
Senator Jerry Moran



Congressman Tim Huelskamp



Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins



Congressman Kevin Yoder



Congressman Mike Pompeo