

June 23, 2016

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As you begin to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (NDAA, H.R. 4909 and S. 2943), the undersigned organizations, concerned with openness and accountability, urge you to maintain the integrity of specific military whistleblower provisions.

While military whistleblowers play an important role in safeguarding our nation from fraud, waste and abuse, speaking out against wrongdoing is particularly challenging for servicemembers. A 2015 Government Accountability Office report exposed deficiencies in the protections offered to military whistleblowers and widespread whistleblower retaliation¹. Two 2014 Office of Personnel Management surveys revealed that a fifth of Department of Defense employees² and a quarter of Department of Defense Inspector General employees³ could not disclose a suspected violation of the law without fear of reprisal. The stakes could not be higher for military whistleblowers. Recognizing this issue's importance, the following House and Senate provisions provide responsible and overdue reforms that should be included in the final NDAA:

House Section 545. Burdens of Proof Applicable to Investigations and Reateatddu]TJ v erTc 0 Tw [(pr)3(o-1

