

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2020



*Congressional Justice
for Warriors Caucus*

Louie Gohmert - Chairman

The Honorable Alexander Conyers
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
Army Review Board Agency
251 18th Street South, Suite 385
Arlington, VA 22202-3531

RE: Parole Release date for Army First Sergeant John E. Hatley

Deputy Assistant Conyers:

We, the undersigned Members of Congress, respectfully request that you exercise your significant discretion to release First Sergeant (1SG) John E. Hatley taking into account the considerable health threat to confined individuals from COVID-19. The Army Clemency and Parole Board (ACPB) graciously granted 1SG Hatley's release, but set the date for October 16, 2020.

The Congressional Justice for Warriors Caucus is extremely concerned with the conditions that accelerate the spread of a highly infectious disease like COVID-19. We have seen, through outbreaks in long-term care facilities in Washington state, the vulnerability of aging populations who have chronic afflictions and individuals who live in confined settings. Infectious diseases like tuberculosis and influenza spread rapidly in confinement, and there is every reason to expect that COVID-19 will do the same.

The Department of Corrections has released people whose health may already be compromised and individuals awaiting release for parole. Los Angeles County has significantly dropped its inmate population, while placing about 35 inmates in either isolation or quarantine. Please do not wait until there is an infection at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) to release low-risk inmates like 1SG Hatley.

As you know, 1SG Hatley has been assessed an extremely low internal and external threat risk from the mental health professional at the USDB. For example, 1SG Hatley has served twelve years of his 25-year prison sentence. During this time, he has demonstrated respect for the law and rules during his confinement. 1SG Hatley has never violated any institutional rules while at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks. There is no chance of 1SG Hatley committing any offenses as his civilian history is absolutely spotless. This makes him an excellent candidate for expedited release.

First Sergeant Hatley desires to care for his disabled parents. The health risk to his parents during this pandemic is very high and having Hatley home to give assistance and care could make all the difference.


As the local community advocates for 1SG Hatley's release, there is an opportunity to act. Public health emergencies magnify the existing dysfunctions of our society. That is certainly true of the intersection of the coronavirus outbreak and America's mass incarceration crisis. Many of the measures that we should take today to address the immediate risks of COVID-19 in incarcerated populations are the same reforms we should have been pursuing all along. Sometimes it takes a crisis to do the right thing.

The corrections system's rationale for 1SG Hatley's incarceration have all been satisfied, leaving no legitimate governmental interest in his continued confinement, particularly regarding his exceptional military record and his twelve-year-long record as a model prisoner. The danger of a COVID-19 outbreak is a real threat to the freedom 1SG Hatley has already been granted. Please take this opportunity to be proactive and release 1SG Hatley.

We respectfully submit that justice would be served by use of your critically important discretion to discern and decide that further incarceration of 1SG Hatley is not required.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rep. Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



Rep. Bill Flores
Member of Congress