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SENATE ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE

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The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Defense opposes S. 402, a bill "to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who served honorably during the Cold War, and for other purposes." The 105th Congress passed, and the President signed into law, a bill that authorized the development of a Cold War certificate. Under the provisions of this law, the certificate recognizes the service and sacrifices rendered by members of the Armed Forces during the Cold War period. Cold War recognition certificates are still being issued, upon application, to eligible personnel.

Establishment of a Cold War Service Medal would duplicate recognition provided by the numerous service medals already authorized during the Cold War era. The Cold War was not actually a war, but was the continuing state of political conflict, military tension, and economic competition existing after World War II, primarily between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States.

When military conflicts did erupt, appropriate service medals were used to recognize service members who participated in specific conflicts or to recognize military service during the Cold War era. Service during the Vietnam conflict was recognized with the Vietnam Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Service in Korea was recognized with the Korean Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal (still being awarded), and the National Defense Service Medal. Additionally, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was awarded to Service members who participated in small-scale operations or conflicts during the Cold War era (e.g., Lebanon, Taiwan Straits, Berlin, Congo, Dominican Republic, and many others).

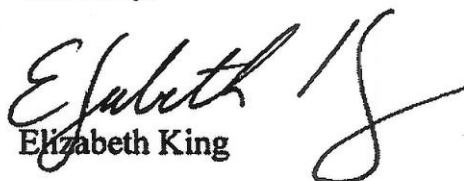
The Department maintains a long-standing policy that service or campaign medals will not cover periods where other service or campaign medals have been authorized. Adherence to this policy has helped to maintain the integrity and prestige of our awards system over the years. Establishment of a Cold War Service Medal would create

duplicate recognition for the numerous service medals already authorized during the Cold War era.

Cost was also a factor in the Congressional decision to issue the Cold War recognition certificate in lieu of a medal. An estimated 35 million military personnel or their next of kin would be eligible for a Cold War Service Medal. The average cost of producing, administering, and mailing a medal would be approximately thirteen dollars per medal. The potential cost of a Cold War Service Medal could exceed \$440 million.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this letter for the consideration of the committee.

Sincerely,

  
Elizabeth King

cc: The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member