

October 15, 2013

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Cummings:

Since its founding in 1929 the Military Officers Association of America has steadfastly supported a strong national defense. We do that primarily by supporting our men and women in uniform, their families, veterans and survivors.

I write to you today on behalf of our more than 380,000 members to express MOAA's grave concern over the government shutdown.

The shutdown is already having an adverse impact on the morale and welfare of the armed forces and their families, and a grave sense of uncertainty in the chain of command is beginning to eat at the fabric of our fighting forces. We are a nation at war and our servicemembers and their families deserve better.

Veterans and their families, too, are experiencing reductions in certain services. Even though VA health care continues uninterrupted under advance appropriations, other services have been suspended or severely cut back including veteran outreach programs, counseling for wounded warriors and student-vets on campus among others.

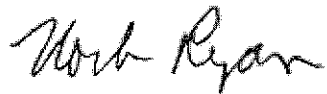
Should the Shutdown extend into late October, funding will run out for the VA to pay earned benefits for our disabled warriors and their survivors, and new GI Bill benefits will be suspended for our returning troops. I am sure you agree that that is unacceptable. MOAA proudly maintains its non-partisan status as a 501(c)(19) veterans organization. We offer no specific recommendations on how to resolve the impasse over funding our government.

But we feel very strongly that you must take action now to restore government funding. The risk to the readiness of our armed forces – especially to the morale and well-being of the 1% of our citizenry who are defending the other 99% -- is too great to delay an agreement only because of political differences.

Our military's ongoing operations in Afghanistan and enormous instability throughout the Middle East and other parts of the world point to the reality that our forces must be ready today and tomorrow to do the nation's bidding. That readiness is at risk if our Congressional leaders fail to step up and do what they were elected to do.

MOAA strongly recommends that you rise above partisan differences and resolve to do what is right for the country – the troops are watching and are expecting you to lead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M" and a prominent "R".