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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

September 1, 2009

Tracy Della Vecchia
Founder, President, Executive Director
MarineParents.com, Inc.
P. O. Box 1115
Columbia, Missouri 65205

Dear Ms. Della Vecchia:

In each Congress since 2001, I have introduced legislation aimed at giving the United States Marine Corps the recognition it deserves as one of the official branches of the military. This year, I introduced H.R. 24, a bill to redesignate the Department of the Navy as the "Department of the Navy and Marine Corps." Then, the Secretary of the Navy would be known as the "Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps." On June 25, the language of H.R. 24 was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives as part of H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. This change will become law if the U.S. Senate agrees to the House position during conference negotiations this fall.

As the head of MarineParents.com, Inc., I am writing to ask your help in making the "Department of the Navy and Marine Corps" a reality. The Navy and the Marine Corps have operated as one fighting team for more than two centuries, and it is time the name of the department they share exemplifies this fact. As a *Chicago Tribune* editorial titled "Step up for the Marines" noted: "The Marines have not asked for complete autonomy. Nothing structurally needs to change in their relationship with the Navy, which has served both branches well. The corps only asks for recognition. Having served their nation proudly and courageously since colonial days, the leathernecks have earned a promotion."

With the help of Senator Pat Roberts – a former Marine who introduced companion legislation in the Senate – and the bill's 308 cosponsors in the House, I am hopeful that this will be the year the Marine Corps is granted the recognition it deserves as an equal part of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps team. Over the past several years, the language of H.R. 24 has been endorsed by several former Navy secretaries, Marine Corps commandants, the Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Fleet Reserve Association and many other individuals and groups. As an organization committed to supporting Marines, Marine moms, dads, spouses, families and friends, I would be tremendously grateful for the support of MarineParents.com, Inc.

Thank you for your service to our nation's Marine families, and your interest in bringing proper recognition to the U.S. Marine Corps.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress (NC-03)