



Montel B. Williams

September 15, 2014

I write you today in hopes that your boss will agree to co-sponsor [H.Res 620 \(Poe, Salmon, Sires\)](#) if you haven't already. As a 22 year veteran of the Marine Corps and the Navy, I have been active on military issues from the day I took off my uniform. In recent years I have fought for better mental health care for those serving and for veterans – advocacy that is clearly badly needed ***with an average of 22 veterans committing suicide daily. To be clear, the issue of a mentally ill United States Marine being held abroad should be held above politics – this is not a Republican or Democratic issue – it is properly simply an “American issue.”***

I'd also respectfully urge your boss to support the efforts of the House Foreign Affairs Committee via the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee [which has noticed a hearing for October 1, 2014](#) at which Mrs. Jill Tahmooressi, myself, and others will give testimony in hopes of shining a light on the issues that Sgt. Tahmooressi's combat related PTSD raises and the urgency it must now bring as his mental health continues to deteriorate without treatment.

I waited past day 150 to take a major public position on the Tahmooressi case, both out of deference to the Mexican system and a deep concern about the anti-Mexican turn in the grassroots advocacy. It is now clear that we cannot wait any longer. As Andrew nears six months in custody, it must be ever present in our minds that he has received ***no treatment for his PTSD while incarcerated.*** Below, you will find links that will allow you to view my correspondence with the Mexican Government to date.

My view is that it's now clear that while some might argue the Mexican system may well be working as it generally does in Mexico from a legal perspective, the Mexican Government is unable *and* unwilling to provide Sgt. Tahmooressi much needed mental health care while in custody – mental health care that I understand to be generally accepted by most as a basic human right.

H.Res 620 is a common sense approach, in my view, to the reality that Sgt. Tahmooressi likely still has 3-4 months left in Mexico before the process reaches its conclusion – all without treatment for his PTSD. While clearly Mexico is an important partner, the cold hard reality is his mother indicates his mental health is deteriorating and he's becoming despondent. While I understand that sound foreign policy respects the sovereignty of partner nations, the political reality is we cannot and should not take a risk that his untreated PTSD will result in a suicide. ***Whatever political problems may exist now, months longer with no treatment for his PTSD raises the specter of far worse problems.***

I would respectfully ask that your boss step into Jill Tahmooressi's shoes and ask "what would I want Congress to do were it my child". Congress has the chance to make a difference here - a past Congress voted to send Sgt. Tahmooressi to war, this Congress has an obligation to stand behind him now. I hope he can count on your support.

Please feel free to reach out to Jon in my office, the contact information is below.

Respectfully Yours,

/s/

Lt. Commander Montel B. Williams (USN, RET.)

Correspondence with Mexican Government (linked)

[Williams Letter to Nieto re Tahmooressi](#)

[Letter to Lt Commander Montel B Williams-21ago2014](#)

[Factsheet AT ENG 020714](#)

[Franks Response To Mx Embassy](#)