

BRIAN J. MAST
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

2182 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3026

171 SW FLAGLER AVENUE
STUART, FLORIDA 34994
(772) 781-3266

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0918

August 4, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

I am deeply concerned about current Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy that prevents fallen Veterans from receiving the proper memorial service that they deserve, and I am writing to urge you to reconsider this policy.

As you know, dozens of my fellow lawmakers attended a funeral service last week in Atlanta, Georgia to honor the late Congressman John Lewis. Meanwhile VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy empowers cemeteries to restrict the number of attendees for Veterans' committal services to 10 people—just a small fraction of those in attendance at Rep. Lewis's service. If our country's politicians can gather in large numbers to pay their respects, certainly our Veterans deserve at least as much if not more.

This policy does a great disservice to those in uniform who put their lives at stake to serve our great nation and deprives our fallen heroes, as well as their families, of the service that they deserve. I am, therefore, strongly urging you to reconsider this policy: all fallen Veterans' family and friends should be able to attend committal services so that they can come together to honor the lives of their fallen loved ones.

Sincerely,



Brian Mast
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Randy C. Reeves
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs
810 Vermont Ave
Washington, DC 20420