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Rhonda J. McMillion
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December 8, 2006

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Bar Association ("ABA") and its more than 400,000 members, I urge you to support language included in S. 3421 giving our nation's veterans the right to retain a lawyer when seeking the benefits to which they are entitled. The current archaic Civil War era prohibition on a veteran's ability to retain counsel is unique and no longer justifiable. The language in S.3421 represents a compromise that would allow a veteran to retain counsel only after an initial adverse ruling.

In our September 25, 2006, letter on Veterans Choice legislation, we addressed potential concerns with lifting the restriction. We also offered to work with the Secretary and service organizations to address ongoing issues, as we have with other federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration.

Our interdisciplinary membership is committed to justice for America's veterans. Accordingly, we urge you to support enactment of the relevant provisions in S. 3421 allowing our veterans greater choice in representation, just as they served in defense of our liberties.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Evans

Note: This letter was individually addressed to every Member of the Senate.