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Congress of the United States
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December 11, 2014

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

As a 29-year Air Force veteran, a Prisoner of War for nearly seven years, and a staunch advocate for our service members and veterans, I write to express my deep concern about an issue one of my constituents recently brought to my attention. This constituent – U.S. Navy veteran James Gagliardo – and his family have experienced great difficulties regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) handling of his benefit.

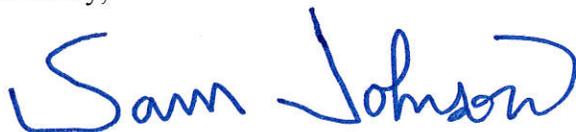
Mr. Gagliardo has received VA benefits for full-time nursing care since 2010. However, on October 12, 2014, the VA informed Mr. Gagliardo that his benefits had been overpaid by the VA for the past four years due to a mistake. As a result, the VA claimed Mr. Gagliardo owed the VA more than \$85,000. They sought to recoup their overpayment via a cut to his benefit. Mr. Gagliardo's case as well as that of another North Texas veteran was recently profiled by Dallas ABC affiliate, WFAA Channel 8 ("*Veterans caught in benefits blunder*").

The concern I have is two-fold. First, to subject veterans and their families to great financial hardship is just plain wrong. Second, I'm concerned that what happened to Mr. Gagliardo may not be an isolated case.

Mr. Secretary, as you well know, veterans have put their lives on the line to protect our country. Veterans like Mr. Gagliardo and his family deserve better from the VA. Simply put, the VA must do a better job. I ask that you do all you can to ensure other veterans and their families are not subjected to the same experience.

As someone who has always been a strong advocate in Congress for our service members and veterans, I am asking for your immediate attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Sam Johnson
Member of Congress