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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Letter	[Letter from Barack Obama] - To: POTUS - From: Barack Obama	2	04/12/2007	Transferred
002	Envelope	[Envelope addressed to POTUS] - To: POTUS - From: Barack Obama	1	04/16/2007	Transferred

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

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- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

723079

FG027

April 12, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my serious concerns over your nomination of Brig. Gen. Michael J. Kussman to the position of Under Secretary for Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). According to a recent story in the online newsmagazine Salon, Dr. Kussman knew of serious problems at Walter Reed Army Medical Center as early as 2004.

At the time, Dr. Kussman was co-chair of VA's Seamless Transition Task Force and oversaw a focus group study with wounded servicemembers and their family members. The report that was produced led to the following conclusion: "All of their comments reflect a lack of a clear documented process at Walter Reed for helping OIF/OEF servicemembers transition to VA." The report also stated that servicemembers were "frustrated, confused, sometimes angry" over their experiences at Walter Reed and that soldiers without family support were "depressed and sad and by themselves." And in some cases, according to the report, family members and soldiers felt that they had to apologize for needing help from the Army at Walter Reed.

If the servicemembers' comments in the focus group report were conveyed to top VA leaders as reported by Salon, then the question is why Dr. Kussman did not act more aggressively with the Defense Department to address these serious concerns.

Before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee considers Dr. Kussman's nomination, I ask that you direct VA Secretary James Nicholson to release all other reports, recommendations, briefings, and actions performed by the Seamless Transition Task Force. Members of the Committee should be able to assess:

- When VA first obtained this troubling information about bureaucratic delays at Walter Reed;
- What actions VA leaders took in 2004 to work with the DOD to streamline portions of the bureaucracy and assist servicemembers; and
- Whether Dr. Kussman and other top leaders at VA could have – and should have – intervened earlier and more aggressively to share this information within VA as well as with Defense Department officials in a joint effort to improve care for our returning service members and their families.

Before the Senate proceeds to confirm Dr. Kussman in this new role, we owe due diligence to our recovering servicemembers and veterans to get to the bottom of these serious allegations.

Sincerely,

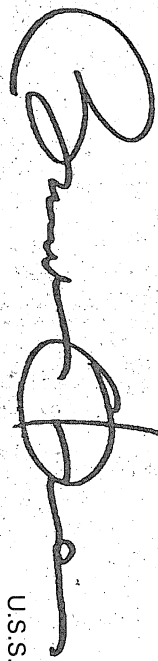
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barack Obama', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Barack Obama
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1306

OFFICIAL BUSINESS


U.S.S.

APR 20 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

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