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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

December 6, 2016

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

I am writing to express my strongest opposition to a potential pardon of Robert Bowdrie "Bowe" Bergdahl before a court-martial can even hear his case. As a Marine Corps combat veteran and member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am deeply concerned about the precedent such a preemptive pardon would set for our Armed Forces.

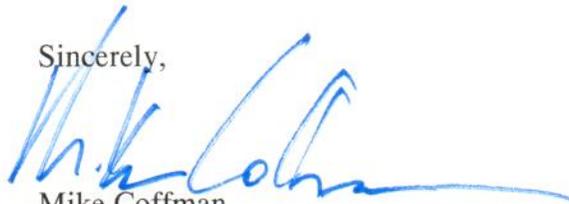
I strongly believe Bowe Bergdahl's decision to abandon his post in a combat zone during the height of the Afghan insurgency was a clear violation of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. As you are aware, the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the military court-martial process are essential to maintaining good order and discipline within the U.S. military, especially during a time of war. His actions must be judged by the pending court-martial.

Bowe Bergdahl's decision to abandon his post was not a "harmless" act that simply led to his capture. It led to a major military search operation in one of the most dangerous regions of Afghanistan, endangering the lives of other U.S. service members, and diverting critical resources away from ongoing counterinsurgency and security operations.

Bowe Berghdal undoubtedly suffered as a prisoner of war. However, his capture and years of mistreatment were a direct result of his own misguided actions.

Desertion and misbehavior before the enemy are extremely serious charges. A preemptive pardon for Bowe Berghdal would seriously undermine the military court-martial process and send the wrong message to the hundreds of thousands of men and women in uniform who have served honorably in combat.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman
U.S. Representative
6th District of Colorado