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

January 2, 2014

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Office of the Majority Leader
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Cantor,

Over the past several months you and I have been working to craft sensible and effective legislation to help young undocumented individuals who came here as children, and have since grown up, gone to school and know of no other country other than the United States. I commend your dedication to looking for solutions for these individuals.

As you are well aware, there are legislative proposals for certain people to legalize through education or the military. Each of these options is worthy and I have no doubt that many of the reported 1.6 million undocumented 18-24 year olds would make dedicated students, and/or valiant soldiers. However, as a Marine Corps combat veteran, my focus has been to strongly support a military option in any legislation regarding these young undocumented individuals.

Although some may find military options for non-citizens to be a novel approach, the history of the United States Armed Services tells a different story. German immigrants served in the Continental Army at Valley Forge; Irish immigrants served during the Civil War; European immigrants of all backgrounds served during World War I and World War II; and many others served in the Korean, Vietnam, and other modern conflicts. As Margaret Stock, author of the book "Immigration Law and the Military" has said, "HR 435 gives the opportunity to enlist thousands of very high quality, American-educated people and alleviate the current and future recruiting crisis in the US Armed Forces." As such, I recommend that while developing your legislation you continue to explore the issue by holding committee hearings that review military options for these young people.

During this review I urge you to consider and subsequently include H.R. 435, *the Military Enlistment Opportunity Act*, in your legislation. H.R. 435 would provide a path for undocumented individuals who qualify to serve and naturalize through military service. Many young people prefer, like I did, to enter military service rather than attend college right away and those who have the desire and skill to be accepted under today's military standards should have the opportunity to serve. Moreover, this proposal also works for the military, which continually needs qualified and skilled talent to enter their ranks. H.R. 435 allows undocumented

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individuals who have passed DHS screening, as well as documented legally present noncitizens, such as the 2012 U.S. Army Soldier of the Year, Saral Shrestha, to join the military.

For America to take full advantage of the talents of these individuals we must highlight the benefits of a path for naturalization through the military. As such, I urge you to support future hearings in the House Armed Services Committee on this subject and include H.R. 435 in immigration legislation so that our colleagues and their constituents can fully realize the value of this untapped domestic resource.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2310 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515