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## United States Senate

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AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

March 8, 2016

President Barack Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

President Obama:

I write to you today regarding my concern about continued leaks by your Administration regarding U.S. military special mission units and their efforts in support of our nation.

Not too long ago, General Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, wrote a letter to Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on the risks assumed by our special operations servicemembers through continued leaks of information to the public regarding special operations activities. However, despite this effort by GEN Votel to end leaks on special operations activities from the Administration, it appears information which outline the activities of our special operations servicemembers continue.

On February 29, 2016, CNN reported that it obtained information from an unnamed Administration official regarding special operations forces in Iraq. This unnamed Administration official, which CNN describes as someone with direct knowledge of the information, provided CNN with specific information regarding a special mission unit. This specific information included the name of the unit, the unit's time in-country, and specific mission related activities this special mission unit is performing as a part of its operations in Iraq which reveal special operations tactics, techniques and procedures.

As a retired Army National Guard officer and the spouse of a retired special operations Soldier, I fully understand the risks to our servicemembers when information about their mission, location, tactics, techniques, and procedures is released to the press or other unauthorized individuals. This release of potentially classified information from Administration officials must end now. Our special operations servicemembers often operate with limited support and in the most dangerous locations around the world, and depend on secrecy and surprise to defeat our nation's enemies and come home to their families. While they stand ready to give the ultimate sacrifice in support of their fellow operators and our country, the Administration must not add greater risk to special operations forces' already high-risk mission set through continued leaks.

To better honor the daily sacrifices of our servicemembers and their families, I urge you to increase your efforts to end leaks regarding special operations missions and to hold those

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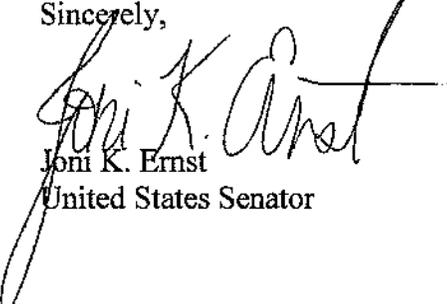
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Administration officials accountable who leak information which puts our servicemembers at greater risk in the conduct of their vital mission.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator