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November 30, 2022

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the 40,000 members of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) we are writing to request that the Chief Dental Officers of the branches of our military have a rank of two-star or higher and that this requirement be included in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Maintaining proper oral health care is important to the readiness of all branches of the United States Military and is an essential component of conserving the fighting strength of the military. Oral health care is an integral part of health care and needs to be an equal priority to all other aspects of military health care, especially in light of recruiting and deployment challenges.

In 1978 legislation was enacted to make the Chief Dental Officer of the Army a Major General and in 2006 to make the Chief Dental Officer of the Air Force a Major General. This requirement was removed in the 2017 NDAA. We are asking that the two-star statutory requirement be reinstated in the 2023 NDAA.

The AGD enacted policy in 1998 endorsing legislation to make the Air Force Assistant Surgeon General for Dental Services a dental officer serving in the rank of Brigadier General with the opportunity to be promoted to Major General. This was accomplished with the two-star requirement in 2006. The historic recognition of the importance of dentistry to the armed forces by requiring that the Chief Dental Officer have a two-star rank needs to be honored by reinstating that requirement.

The deemphasizing of the importance of oral health care can lead to difficulty recruiting dentists to serve, to the diminution of the oral health of our servicemen and to a decrease in overall military readiness.

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The AGD is proud of our members who are currently serving their country by providing oral health care to our servicemen and women, as well as all the veterans who belong to the AGD. On behalf of both our active-duty members and our veterans we strongly urge that the 2023 NDAA include a provision restoring the two-star rank requirement for the Chief Dental Officers. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Daniel J. Buksa, JD, Associate Executive Director, Public Affairs, by phone at (312) 440-4328 or via email at daniel.buksa@agd.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hans Guter'.

Hans Guter, DDS, FAGD
President
Academy of General Dentistry

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Myron Bromberg'.

Myron (Mike) Bromberg, DDS
Congressional Liaison
Academy of General Dentistry