

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0918**

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you may know, the Department of Defense recently denied the American Veterans' (AMVETS) request for a permit to use Pentagon parking areas as a staging ground for their annual Rolling to Remember Memorial Day event. I urge you to reverse this decision.

AMVETS is a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representing 20 million veterans and was the first VSO to be composed of veterans of World War II. AMVETS offers critical services to the veteran community including aiding in their transition back to civilian life, providing free assistance in filing claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs and advocating for veterans' legislative priorities.

Among AMVETS' topmost advocacy priorities are bringing awareness to the 82,000 servicemen and women still considered missing-in-action by the Department of Defense and the 22 veterans that die by suicide every day. Bringing attention to these matters is the chief aim of the Rolling to Remember Memorial Day event, and as a veteran myself, these causes are personal to me as well.

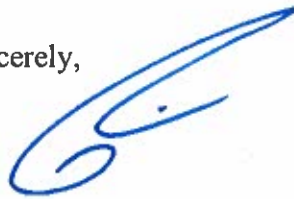
The Pentagon parking lot has been used as a staging ground for Memorial Day events for decades. AMVETS relies on this staging ground as it is the largest public area near Washington D.C. and has proved an ideal staging ground for more than 30 years. Moreover, the partnership serves as a strong signal of solidarity between the Department of Defense and AMVETS.

On April 30, 2021, however, the Department of Defense denied AMVETS' request for a permit to use Pentagon parking areas for the event. The permit was allegedly denied based on safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, guidance from your own Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledges that the risks of outdoor transmission are very low, and AMVETS is willing to work the Pentagon to ensure property safety protocols are in place. In fact, utilizing the Pentagon's parking areas would enable the event to take place in the safest possible way, given that it is the largest available space to facilitate social distancing.

Moreover, nine state, local and federal agencies have already approved AMVETS' permit for this year, including the National Park Service, Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, Arlington County Police Department, Arlington County Fire Department, Virginia State Police and District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Services. All of these agencies believe this event can happen safely.

As a result, your Administration is the only remaining barrier to ensuring this Memorial Day tradition goes on as planned. Therefore, I urge you to overturn the decision by the Department of Defense and grant a permit to AMVETS for use of the Pentagon parking lot. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter that is deeply personal to myself and many veterans across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Mast', with a large, stylized initial 'B'.

Brian Mast  
Member of Congress