

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

The Honorable Thomas B. Modly
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Esper and Acting Secretary Modly:

As the Navy and FBI continue to investigate the December 6, 2019 terrorist attack at Naval Air Station Pensacola, we respectfully request serious consideration be given to bestowing the Navy Distinguished Civilian Medal with Valor to the Naval Air Station Police Officer wounded in the line of duty; and the Secretary of Defense Medal of Freedom to the Escambia County Sheriff's deputies that responded to the incident. Furthermore, those service members wounded in the attack also merit the Purple Heart.

We share your sorrow for the loss of our three sailors and praise the action of others that quickly responded. Through their heroism, these sailors nobly put their own lives at risk, preventing the terrorist from taking more lives. Based on the information gathered to date, and a recent statement by the Attorney General, we believe that those service members wounded and killed in this attack warrant the Purple Heart. As Attorney General Barr said on January 13, 2020, this was an act of terrorism. In accordance with 10 U.S.C. 1129a, the Secretary shall consider Purple Heart eligibility to "a member on active duty who was killed or wounded in an attack by a foreign terrorist organization in circumstances where the death or wound is the result... due to such member's status as a member of the armed forces."

The brave service members and law enforcement personnel who risked their lives on that horrible day have the admiration and respect of the American people. We encourage the Navy to honor their heroic actions by bestowing the appropriate civilian awards and the Purple Heart to those who so deserve it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator