

VERONICA ESCOBAR
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION INTEGRITY,
SECURITY, AND ENFORCEMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND
LIMITED GOVERNMENT
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS
DEMOCRATIC POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
CO-CHAIR



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

WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE:
2448 FAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4831

EL PASO OFFICE:
221 N. KANSAS STREET, SUITE 1500
EL PASO, TX 79901
(915) 541-1400

<http://escobar.house.gov>

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS
DEPUTY WHIP
CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS
CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

November 14, 2024

Dear President Biden,

I write you to express my proud and avid support for the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to Private Marcelino Serna, a decorated hero of the First World War and a former resident of the El Paso community which I am so honored to represent in Congress.

Private Marcelino Serna is the most decorated World War I veteran in Texas' history, having valiantly served in the United States Army from April 1917 to May 1919. During his time in service, Private Serna demonstrated exceptional bravery and integrity, going so far as to conduct dangerous scouting missions alone, single-handedly capturing 24 enemy combatants while under heavy fire, and upholding the rules of war in protecting prisoners of war from wrongful execution at the hands of his fellow soldiers. Beyond the battlefield, Private Serna served at a time when the achievements of minority soldiers often went overlooked and underrecognized. In fact, Private Serna was previously informed he was ineligible for the Medal of Honor for not speaking enough English to be promoted. Despite this, Private Serna was the first Hispanic service member to receive the Distinguished Service Cross. He is also a recipient of the Purple Heart, as well as the Croce al Merito di Guerra by the Italian government

In recent years, and under your thoughtful leadership, the United States and our military have engaged in a reflective conversation on our nation's history – one that recognizes the impact racism and injustice have had on providing our service members from minority communities the recognition we owe them. The Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act mandated crucial action to rectify some of this history, establishing the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense. In the years since, your Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin III, accepted the Commission's recommendations and oversaw their implementation, a tangible example of our nation's effort to turn the page on the dark chapter of the Confederacy. You have collectively sought to recognize the shining heroes of our history from communities of color that have sacrificed so much in service to our country while fighting prejudice all the way. Your administration has led monumental efforts to recognize these sacrifices, empower diverse perspectives, and even further – to inspire future generations of Americans.

As you have said many times, our diversity is our strength. However, the people of color and immigrants who have significantly contributed to our military have for too long been hidden in

the shadows of dark times in our history. Private Serna was one of many to courageously chart this path, a true pioneer in the now long and storied history of Hispanic service members proudly contributing to our national defense. I humbly and respectfully request Private Serna's historic contributions are taken into consideration while you review his nomination package, and I make this request with my beautiful community of El Paso, as well as the countless Hispanic Americans who have so proudly served our country, past and present, in mind.

Thank you kindly for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being significantly larger and more stylized than the others.

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress