

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 5, 2024

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Secretary McDonough:

As Congressional Representatives for the City of San Antonio, we write to express our profound dismay over the recent decision to discontinue the annual Veterans Day Observance Ceremony at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

For many years, this site in San Antonio has served as a primary focal point for families, veterans, servicemembers, and citizens to gather on Veterans Day and pay their respects to the men and women who honorably served our country.

As the final resting place for more than 180,000 individuals, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery is home to many native Texans, military heroes, and even Medal of Honor recipients, whose acts of extraordinary valor have earned them the highest military accolades. By discontinuing this ceremony at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, we fail to adequately honor their legacy and diminish the significance of those hallowed grounds.

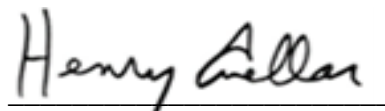
While we recognize there may be challenges with organizing such an event at two separate National Cemeteries in San Antonio—as is currently the case—we do not believe these challenges are insurmountable, and they are certainly worth overcoming. “Military City, USA” boasts a uniquely large population of veteran families. Providing them with more than one option to honor their loved ones on Veterans Day is not only fitting, but it keeps in line with efforts at the VA to improve accessibility.

In closing, we emphasize that the Veterans Day ceremony at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery is a cherished event, not just for those directly involved, but for the entire South Texas community. We are committed to working with you, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other relevant stakeholders to explore every possible avenue to uphold such an important tradition at this site. Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter.

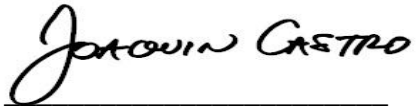
Sincerely,



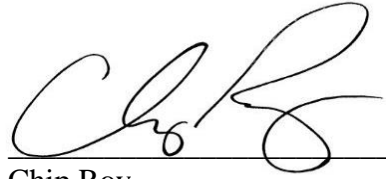
Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Chip Roy
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress