DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE VICE CHIEF OF STAFF
201 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0201

May 11, 2005

The Honorable Ike Skelton
United States House of Representatives
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2504

Dear Congressman Skelton:

The Army is in opposition to the amendment to H.R. 1815 proposing the prohibition of assignment of female members of the Army to Forward Support Companies as written.

First and foremost the Army is in strict and full compliance with Department of Defense policies regarding women in combat. This is a complex issue because of the present and future nature of the contemporary operating battlefield which is no longer linear. Women Soldiers have performed magnificently in all types of Army formations, excluding those outlined in current policies.

The proposed amendment will cause confusion in the ranks and will send the wrong signal to the brave young men and women fighting the Global War on Terrorism. This is not the time to create such confusion.

Army senior leadership, as well as field commanders, are studying the Army Modular Force as well as the implications of the current operating battle space in which we are fighting. We believe we have assessed the role of women in these organizations, but we are continuing to study our new design in accordance with DoD and Army policies. This review will include the assignment of women to Forward Support Companies and therefore any new legislation is premature at this time.

Army senior leaders are prepared to further brief and discuss this issue with you or your staff and request the opportunity to do so at your convenience.

I have discussed with VL, CSA, and he concurs.

Richard A. Cody
General, United States Army
Vice Chief of Staff

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