

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2026

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Samuel B. Brown  
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins and Under Secretary Brown:

We commend your leadership in revitalizing the Department of Veterans Affairs in fulfilling its purpose of serving its mission in caring for those who have served our nation's military. Our veterans deserve the utmost of care, honor, and service – from the moment they raise their right hand in defense of our Constitution, to the day we lay them to rest with the dignity and honor they so rightfully deserve.

No greater, more solemn duty exists than to ensure our nation's veterans are laid to rest with such reverence befitting their service and sacrifice to their nation and their Creator. In preparation for their burial, veterans are afforded the opportunity to select an emblem of belief for inscription on their headstone. Veterans and their next-of-kin may select from nearly one hundred different emblems representing several different belief systems. This includes those signifying several different denominations of Christianity, along with emblems for those of Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and several other faiths. While even atheists, humanists, and wiccans have an eligible emblem of belief for inscription, Catholic veterans do not currently have the option to select a crucifix, an emblem of belief that most accurately represents the faith of nearly twenty percent of all veterans.

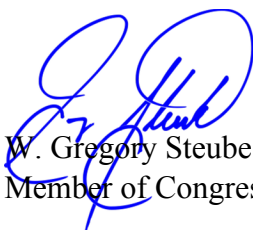
In the pursuit of religious freedom, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to our Constitution, we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Cemetery Administration to offer the crucifix as an eligible emblem of belief for inscription on headstones at national cemeteries.

With that said, we respectfully request your response to the following questions by May 8, 2026:

1. What criteria and review process does the VA use when evaluating and approving new emblems of belief for inscription on headstones at national cemeteries?
2. Has the VA received any requests to offer a crucifix as an eligible emblem of belief, and if so, what was the outcome of such requests?
3. If the VA intends to approve such request, what is the anticipated timeline for approval?


We appreciate your attention to this matter and your steadfast commitment to honoring and ensuring the dignity of our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you to ensure all veterans are honored in accordance with their sincerely held beliefs.


Sincerely,





W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress

  
Riley M. Moore  
Member of Congress

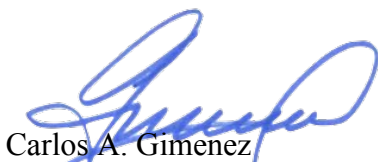
  
C. Scott Franklin  
Member of Congress


  
Rich McCormick, MD, MBA  
Member of Congress


  
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress


  
Michael A. Rulli  
Member of Congress

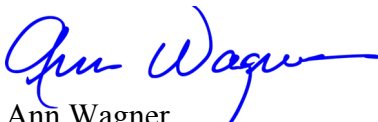
  
Anna Paulina Luna  
Member of Congress


  
Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress


  
Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress

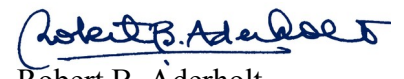
  
Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

  
Zach Nunn  
Member of Congress

  
Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress

  
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

  
John J. McGuire III  
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Robert B. Aderholt  
Member of Congress

Elijah Crane  
Member of Congress

Cory Mills  
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Thomas P. Tiffany  
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Ron Estes  
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Mike Kennedy, M.D.  
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Mike Ezell  
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Stephanie Bice  
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Tom Barrett  
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Mike Collins  
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Mike Haridopolos  
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John H. Rutherford  
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Mike Carey  
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Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



Nick LaLota  
Member of Congress



John R. Moolenaar  
Member of Congress




Mark B. Messmer  
Member of Congress



Jeff Hurd  
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



Aaron Bean  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress




Mike Flood  
Member of Congress




Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



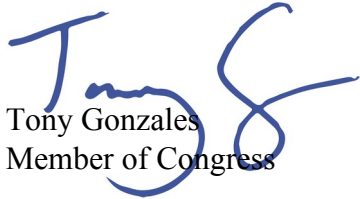
Andy Ogles  
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
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James C. Moylan  
Member of Congress



Tony Gonzales  
Member of Congress