Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 26, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington D.C. 20311

The Honorable Hung Cao
Acting-Secretary of the Navy
1200 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Acting Secretary Cao:

We write regarding the recent reporting that the Department of the Navy is considering renaming the *USS Doris Miller* potentially in honor of President Trump.[1] Renaming this ship after a sitting President would be unprecedented and break longstanding tradition. Most importantly, this would diminish the recognition of one of our country's greatest military heroes. It was during President Trump's first term that the Navy announced CVN-81 would bear Doris Miller's name.[2] Reversing that decision now would be a significant step backward in honoring the courage and sacrifice of those who have served our country.

The future *USS Doris Miller* will be the first aircraft carrier to be named for an African American and the first named in honor of an enlisted sailor. Those distinctions reflect the bravery and courage during the attack on Pearl Harbor by Doris 'Dorie' Miller, who was later awarded the Navy Cross, the Navy's second-highest honor.[3]

On December 7, 1941, Miller was serving aboard the USS West Virginia when Japan's attack began. At the time, Miller was a Mess Attendant Third Class, and after his station came under fire, despite lacking proper training, he took control of an anti-aircraft gun and fired at incoming aircraft. Even when the ship began to sink, it was only when he ran out of ammunition did he abandon his position. But in the process, he still managed to assist his fellow wounded sailors and help them reach safety.

Doris Miller's story is one of extraordinary bravery, service, and pure patriotism. When he served, segregation restricted the roles available to Black sailors and servicemembers. Yet, when his country came under attack, Miller did not hesitate for one second to put himself in harms'

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1 Zachary Cohen et al., *Navy Weighs Renaming Aircraft Carrier Honoring Black WWII Hero After Trump*, CNN Aug. 20, 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/20/politics/navy-weighs-renaming-carrier-black-war-hero-to-trump

2 Navy to Name Future Ford Class Aircraft Carrier After WWII Hero Doris Miller, U.S. Navy Jan. 19, 2020, https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Press-Releases/display-pressreleases/Article/2236583/navy-to-name-future-ford-class-aircraft-carrier-after-wwii-hero-doris-miller/

3 U.S. Navy Discusses Renaming Aircraft Carrier for Trump, Replacing Black World War II Hero, NBC NEWS, Aug. 20, 2026, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/navy-discusses-renaming-aircraft-carrier-trump-black-uss-doris-miller-rcna593667

way to defend his fellow sailors and his nation. This story embodies the finest traditions of the United States Armed Forces.

Black Americans have served in every major American conflict, often defending a country that did not provide or even recognize their equal rights while home. Their service and sacrifice are an integral part of our country's military history. The decision to name CVN-81 for Doris Miller recognized not only one extraordinary sailor, but generations of enlisted servicemembers whose courage and contributions have too often gone unnoticed and unrecognized.

In 2020, then-Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly announced the decision to honor Doris Miller by placing his name on CVN-81, the newest and most powerful warship.[4] It was Acting-Secretary Modly who said that the decision honored "the contributions of all our enlisted ranks, past and present, men and women, of every race, religion, and background."[5]

Our aircraft carriers are among the most visible symbols of American military power. They are stationed all over the world, projecting strength, protecting our national security, and reminding our allies that we will have their backs at their time of need. The names these ships carry should preserve the legacies of Americans whose service, sacrifice, and leadership represent the very best of our democracy and our Armed Services.

There is no question that Dorie Miller meets that standard. His story deserves to be remembered aboard one of the most powerful warships ever constructed. There has never been a time when we have named a warship after a sitting president. Changing course now to satisfy a sitting President's ego, especially one who dodged military service to his country, would be shamefully wrong.

We urge you to reject this plan and ensure that CVN-81 bears the name *USS Doris Miller*. Our Navy must continue honoring the courage of those that answered their country's call to service.

Sincerely,

Wesley Bell
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

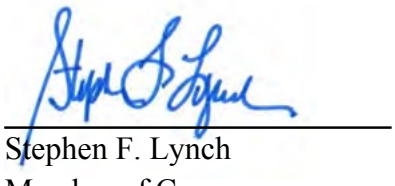
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

4 Navy to Name Future Ford Class Aircraft Carrier After WWII Hero Doris Miller, U.S. Navy Jan. 19, 2020, https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Press-Releases/display-pressreleases/Article/2236583/navy-to-name-future-ford-class-aircraft-carrier-after-wwii-hero-doris-miller/

5 *CVN 81 – USS Doris Miller,* SEAFORCES ONLINE, https://www.seaforces.org/usnships/cvn/CVN-81-USS-Doris-Miller.htm



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



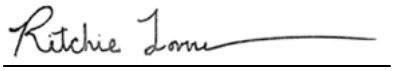
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



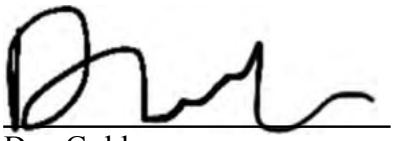
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



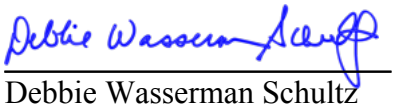
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



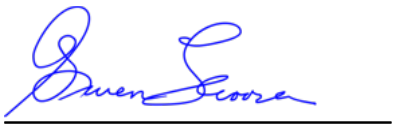
Dave Min
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



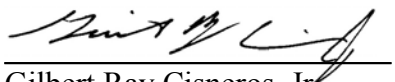
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



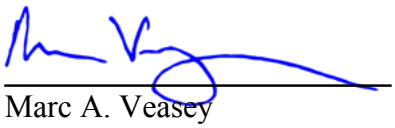
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



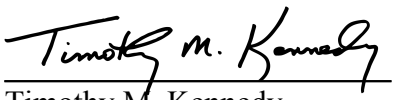
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



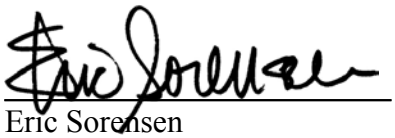
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



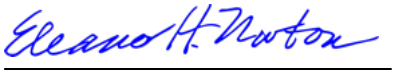
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



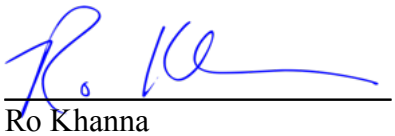
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



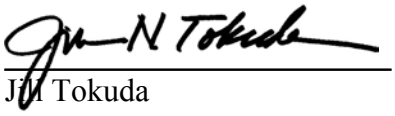
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



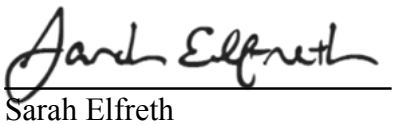
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



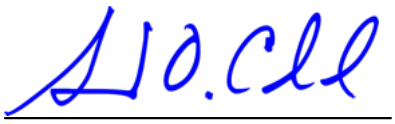
Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress



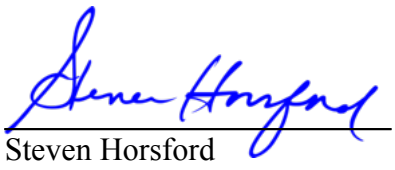
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



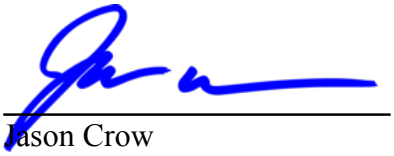
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



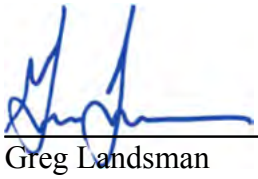
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



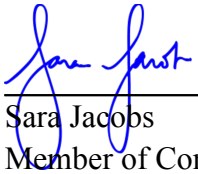
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



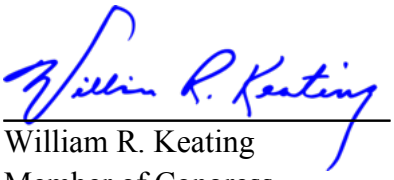
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



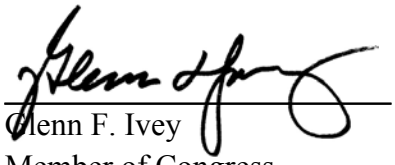
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



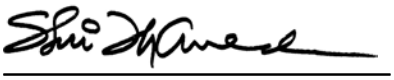
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



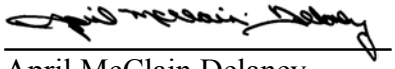
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Glenn F. Ivey
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



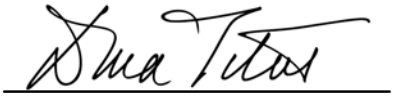
April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



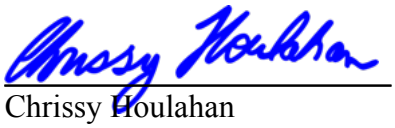
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress
(OH-03)



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



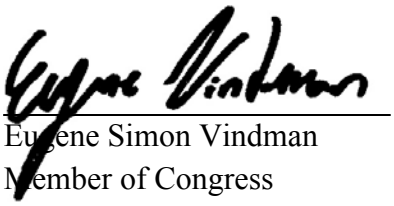
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



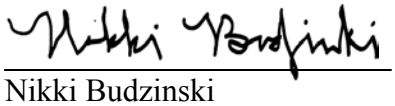
Ed Case
Member of Congress



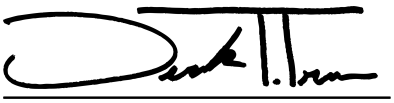
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



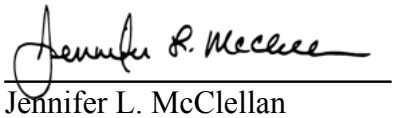
Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



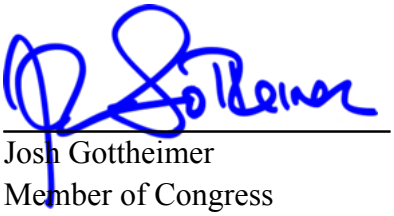
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



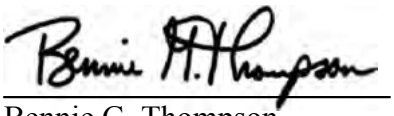
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



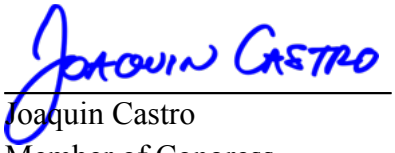
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



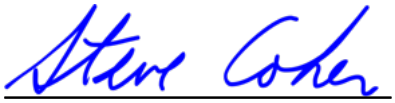
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



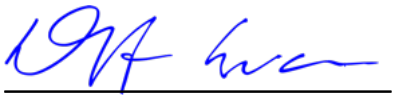
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



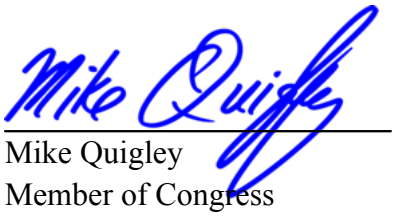
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



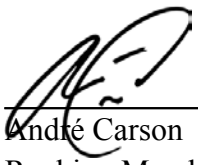
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



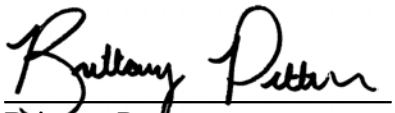
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



André Carson
Ranking Member, Aviation Subcommittee



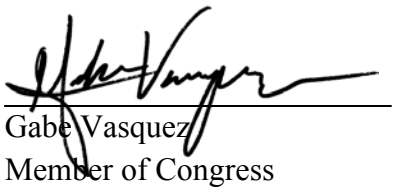
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



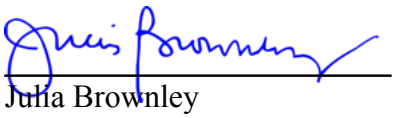
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



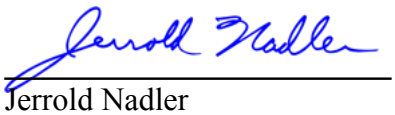
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



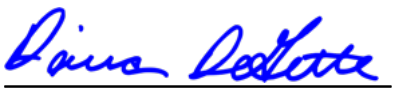
Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



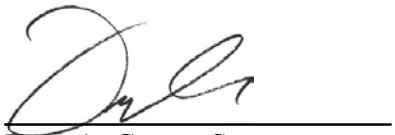
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



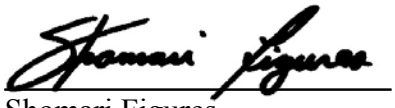
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



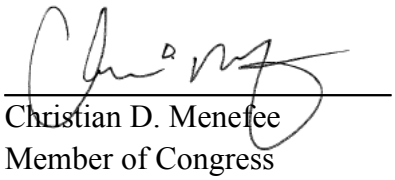
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



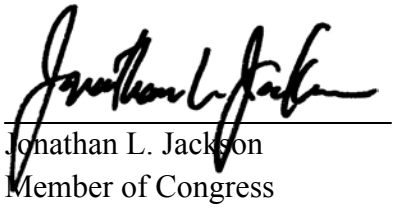
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



Christian D. Menefee
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress