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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

December 11, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my deep disappointment that the 14 pardons and two commutations you granted on November 24, 2008, did not include commutations for imprisoned U.S. Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean. Instead, clemency was granted to those convicted of crimes such as drug conspiracy, tax evasion, poisoning bald eagles, dumping hazardous waste, bank embezzlement and theft of government property.

Mr. President, this week I opened a Christmas card which pictured two beautiful families with three children each. I was deeply saddened when I realized these were photos of the Ramos and Compean families – who will face another Christmas with husbands and fathers locked away in federal prison if you fail to intervene on their behalf. Knowing that it has become customary during the final days of a president's term to grant pardons and commutations in criminal cases, I urge you to take the time to personally review the prosecution of agents Ramos and Compean. I am confident the facts of their case will lead you to the same conclusion countless American citizens have already reached: there are no individuals more worthy of presidential commutations than agents Ramos and Compean. The facts of the case will show – as Judge E. Grady Jolly stated on December 3, 2007, during the agents' appeal – “the government overreacted here ... for some reason, this one got out of hand.” By attempting to apprehend an illegal alien drug smuggler, agents Ramos and Compean were *enforcing* our laws – not breaking them. Simply put, the indictments against these men were unjustified.

As countless Americans and many in Congress have brought to your attention over the past two years, agents Ramos and Compean were convicted and sentenced to 11 and 12 years respectively for shooting and wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across the U.S. border in 2005. Both men entered prison on January 17, 2007, and have served nearly two years of their sentences. Since the agents' convictions, your office has received thousands of phone calls from concerned citizens and numerous letters from members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. Most recently, on November 13, 2008, I wrote a letter urging you to commute the agents' sentences to time served. On November 20, 2008, I also joined Congressmen Bill Delahunt, Dana Rohrabacher and others in a letter to Pardon Attorney Ronald Rodgers which outlined the rationale for this request.

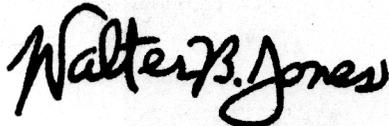
Many disturbing details of the Ramos and Compean case have garnered national attention and raised serious concerns over the lack of fairness in the proceedings against these two men – including the prosecution's efforts to seek out and offer immunity to a habitual Mexican drug

smuggler, a sealed indictment of the smuggler's subsequent drug offenses and insufficient proof of whether or not the smuggler was unarmed, as he claimed at trial. All of these factors strongly call into question whether justice was served.

Among the most serious matters warranting your consideration is the U.S. Attorney's decision to charge Ramos and Compean with violations of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) – which pertains to the use of a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence and carries a mandatory 10-year sentence. Any failure by the agents to report the shooting of the drug smuggler constitutes an administrative error that should have been addressed. However, the application of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) to two U.S. Border Patrol agents in lawful possession of their firearms appears grossly inappropriate. Because agents Ramos and Compean were required to carry firearms during the course of their duties, I urge you to consider commuting this 10-year mandatory minimum sentence enhancement.

Mr. President, the end of your term is quickly approaching and time is running out for you to heed the calls of the American people and reverse the grave injustice committed against agents Ramos and Compean. No useful purpose is served by the continued incarceration of these distinguished law enforcement officers. During this Christmas season, a time of peace and thanksgiving for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, I urge you to open your heart to the pleas of the American people and commute the sentences of these two Hispanic-American heroes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter B. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress