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May 26, 2011

General Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

RE: VA Clinic at Florida National Guard, Fort Homer Hesterly Armory site in Tampa, Florida

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I am very pleased that the Veterans Administration continues to move forward on the development of a VA clinic at the Florida National Guard Fort Homer Hesterly Armory in Tampa. Veterans need an easily accessible health clinic in the heart of Tampa, in a neighborhood where they are so proud of their service to the country. There is no better way to demonstrate how much we value the contributions of our veterans than to ensure that they can easily access medical services and checkups in their community. This is especially important due to the high number of outpatient veterans served at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System.

Thank you for responding to our community's desire to establish a health clinic in the area. Fort Homer Hesterly Armory is both historical and practical for such an establishment. I hear from many older veterans in Tampa that trips to Bay Pines in St. Petersburg and Haley in Tampa have become more difficult over the years.

Thomas Capello, the Acting Director of the Haley Veterans' Hospital, Nancy Resissener, the former Acting Director and Emmet R. Titshaw Jr., the Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard have been exemplary in their commitment to the clinic. I understand a lease agreement is imminent and urge you to act expeditiously to finalize the matter.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss the status of the clinic in Washington or Tampa. Furthermore, all of us in the Tampa Bay area would be honored if you chose to visit Haley, Bay Pines and the Armory clinic site.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Chief of Staff, Clay Phillips, at 202-225-3376 or 813-871-2817.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
U.S. Representative
Florida - District 11

Cc: Emmet R. Titshaw Jr., the Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard & Thomas Capello, the Acting Director of the Haley Veterans' Hospital