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The Honorable Spencer Bachus  
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Dear Honorable Congressman Bachus,

Thank you for your dedication to helping military members over so many years. Our family appreciates your selfless service. I am the wife of a veteran, with twenty years of service through at least 4 wars and many campaigns, Major Reid Armistead. I am gravely concerned about the anthrax vaccine and the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program (AVIP), so much so that many military families and medical professionals have come together with me to form a 501(c)(4) military family advocacy group called Protecting Our Guardians.

When you stated in your letter to Congressman Floyd Spence on Nov. 9, 1999 that the risky anthrax vaccine was hurting retention and recruiting of quality military personnel, you were 100% right. My husband has just retired from the 117<sup>th</sup> ARW because he was forced to choose between his health and his extraordinary career. He was one of the best pilots in his unit, and his unit is one of the best tanker squadrons in our country. I call Reid the "6 million dollar man" because Congressman Burton said that is what it costs to get an experienced military aviator, along with about 9 years of training. This investment in a good man and a top pilot has been overlooked in the modern push to turn our bodies into Bio-Shields.

Reid took three anthrax vaccines after Bioport (the manufacturer) was shutdown by the FDA, cleaned up, and reopened. He was hoping that the anthrax vaccine would be safe after all that. Unfortunately, the formula still proved harmful. His reactions became severe after the third shot. The bright red welt that was 3.5 inches in diameter cleared up after 3 months. The numbness and tingling in his hands and feet took only 3 weeks to clear up. The fatigue lasted for a long time. The arthritic pain in his joints lasted about a year. The gastrointestinal effects required surgery 7 months after his third shot. This was a very trying time for our family. Reid's civilian doctor has recommended no further anthrax immunizations because Reid's allergic reaction could be deadly. Friends said to just get a medical waiver but that would've made him non-worldwide deployable. He would have been edged out of the career he loved. We have three young children. Reid decided it would be better to be a healthy father than a disabled or dead veteran from an anthrax vaccine.

As I'm sure you are aware, the DoD is appealing Federal Judge Emmet G. Sullivan's injunction of the AVIP (occurred on Oct. 27, 2004) and is pressuring other governmental bodies to make the anthrax vaccine mandatory again. The FDA has recently reported that 21 people have died from the anthrax vaccine since 2000; and 4,136 people have reported adverse reactions to the anthrax vaccine through the FDA's VAERS system since the 1990s. The FDA's current pattern seems to be one of licensing drugs that later prove to be deadly -- such as with Vioxx, Celebrex, and certain anti-depressants. The FDA is also now allowed to "fast-track" biodefense products through their system. On a Sunday night, after the recent Defense Appropriations Bill had already been through the House Conference Committee, Sen. Frist introduced 40 pages of new material that waived the liability of pharmaceutical companies that develop and produce biodefense vaccines (of which anthrax is one) and drugs. There was no opportunity allowed for Congressmen and Senators to read this material, analyze it, or modify it. The legislation giving indemnity to these companies passed because our troops need their money for the year to keep our nation secure. Yet

our national security is undermined on several levels when military members suffer vaccine injuries, disabilities, and even death.

When Bioport was given indemnity for producing anthrax vaccine, we saw the tragedies that followed. We predict that military members and first responders will face more of the same problems with the new biodefense vaccines and drugs, because the traditional checks and balances of our government are no longer in place. New legislation such as S 1873 and HR 3970 as well as the Bioshield II Act clearly states "No judicial review" and "No subpoena." Our Constitutional right to a trial with a jury of our peers is repeatedly being infringed upon. This legislative trend shields drug companies, not citizens, and actually puts people's health -- and their freedom -- in great danger.

Congressman Bachus, your sponsorship of bills HR2548 and HR2543 was heroic. You were one of the few who did the right thing. Will you help protect our military members again? Reid and I visited your office with a delegation of experts in April 2005 and met with Julie Busbee. We e-mailed some draft legislation to her over the summer that is comprehensive and will solve the AVIP problem. Congressional oversight, a strictly voluntary AVIP, and stringent testing to ensure a safe and uncontaminated anthrax vaccine, are key to helping restore the health, strength, and trust of our military members and their families. Would you please consider sponsoring draft legislation along these lines?

May our Savior bless you,

Marguerite M. Armistead  
Protecting Our Guardians, President