



FREDERICA S. WILSON
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
17TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

June 25, 2011

Secretary Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

I write to you today on behalf of former Petty Officer 2nd Class, Elisha Leo Dawkins. Mr. Dawkins grew up in Miami, Mr. Dawkins went to school in Miami, and Mr. Dawkins served his nation honorably before returning back to Miami.

I was unaware of Mr. Dawkins' story before it was published in the June 25th edition of the Miami Herald, but as I investigated further I came to the conclusion that this man is not the type of individual the Department of Homeland Security should be detaining – particularly in light of the June 17th Memorandum on 'exercising prosecutorial discretion' penned by Director Morton. This is a man we should be celebrating.

Mr. Dawkins came to America as a young child with his mother. Shortly thereafter, his mother was deported and he remained in America where he was raised. From my understanding, Mr. Dawkins was raised to believe he had been born in America, and he has consistently expressed this view. He went to Poinciana Park Elementary School, competed in sports at Miami Central High School, and served in two branches of the military – with distinction. Mr. Dawkins served in both the Army and the Navy, in Iraq and at Guantanamo. He is the recipient of the National Defense Service medal, the Armed Forces Reserves medal, the Overseas Service ribbon, the Global War on Terror ribbon, the Iraq Campaign medal, and the Army Service ribbon. He is all that is right with America.

Unfortunately, today, he is being held in a detention center. His detention stems from the fact he purportedly committed a felony by checking the 'no' response on a passport application when asked whether he had ever previously completed another. It is my understanding that Mr. Dawkins began applying for a passport in 2003, but never completed the process when he discovered he was missing required documentation. His 'felonious' act occurred in 2006, a full year prior to being deployed to Iraq. Before his honorable discharge. Before obtaining a nursing degree from Florida State College. Before joining the Naval Reserves. And, before being sent

to Guantanamo to document conditions at the camp. The fact that he now finds himself in a similar encampment on American soil, so far removed in time from his 'fault' and after two tours in the U.S. military, is a tragedy.

Mr. Dawkins is not someone who should find himself in a detention center. His situation is more than unfortunate, it is inexplicable. I am asking, earnestly, for your help. I am asking that Mr. Dawkins be allowed to continue to be the type of role model he has always been – here, on American soil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederica S. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress