

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 10, 2025

The Honorable John Phelan
Secretary of the Navy
U.S. Department of the Navy
1200 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Phelan:

We write to inquire about the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Seaman Angelina Petra Resendiz. Her death has raised serious questions regarding the timeliness and handling of her chain of command's response to credible concerns about Seaman Resendiz's whereabouts before her tragic passing.

As you may know, on May 29, 2025, Angelina P. Resendiz, a 21-year-old sailor from Brownsville, Texas, went missing from her barracks at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. That same day, Seaman Resendiz's mother was made aware of her daughter's disappearance by one of her colleagues. She contacted her duty station, where Seaman Resendiz's chain of command responded that her daughter had been located. It is imperative to know what protocols were activated and the elements by which her chain of command reached that conclusion. Despite early warnings from her colleagues, friends, and family, the U.S. Navy did not classify Seaman Resendiz as a missing person until June 3, 2025, at which point the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and the Virginia State Police were involved. Tragically, on June 9, 2025, her body was found in a wooded area behind an elementary school 10 miles from Naval Station Norfolk.

The Navy has a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of the men and women who take an oath to defend our country. When a service member goes missing, their next of kin should be provided with relevant and accurate information as soon as possible, and an investigation should be launched immediately.

During the 11 days between Seaman Resendiz's disappearance and the discovery of her body on June 9, 2025, several questionable actions have come to light that warrant further inquiry. To that end, we ask that the U.S. Department of the Navy and NCIS immediately conduct a swift, independent, and thorough investigation of the circumstances that led up to the tragic death of Seaman Resendiz and provide an update as quickly as possible. Angelina's loved ones deserve nothing less than accountability and justice.

To better understand the circumstances of this case, we request a response to the following questions by August 1, 2025.

1. We have been made aware that a U.S. Navy sailor assigned to the U.S.S. Harry S. Truman is currently in pretrial confinement and is expected to be charged in connection with Seaman Resendiz's death. We have also received reports that said sailor was under

investigation for an unrelated incident of sexual harassment when he was transferred from the U.S.S. Truman to Naval Station Norfolk, which is where he interacted with Seaman Resendiz.

- a. Is this report true?
 - b. Is it common practice to transfer sailors to other units while they are under an active investigation?
2. Why and when was Seaman Resendiz assigned the duty status “Absent Without Leave (AWOL)” / “Unauthorized Absence (UA)”?
3. Why was Seaman Resendiz not classified as “Duty Status – Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN)”?
4. Were concerns from her family about her disappearance not taken into consideration? What steps were taken to address these concerns?
5. Did her command structure complete a search of Seaman Resendiz’s barracks, as required by MILPERSMAN 1600-040, before designating her as AWOL / UA?
 - a. If so, when was the search completed?
 - b. If not, why not?
6. Is it common practice for the Navy to pre-emptively assign this AWOL / UA status to sailors who fail to report for work? What metrics are taken into consideration?
7. Did the classification of Seaman Resendiz as AWOL / UA delay the transfer of this case to NCIS and the subsequent start of a missing persons investigation? What other factors delayed the commencement of this investigation?
8. What protocols were triggered to preserve the body of Seaman Resendiz once her remains returned to Texas on June 20, 2025?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



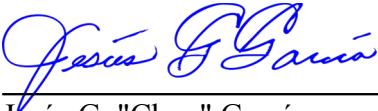
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



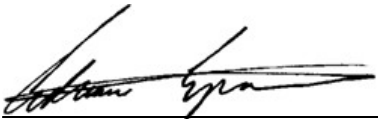
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
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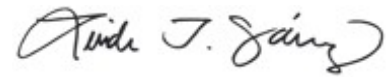
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



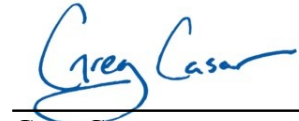
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



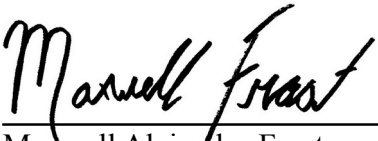
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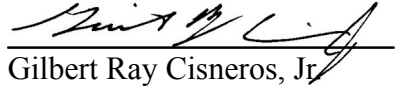
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