



**Legislative Alert #113-2: SUPPORT H.R. 258 and S. 210, the Stolen Valor Act**  
VETERANS

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**Issue Background:** On 20 December 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law The Stolen Valor Act of 2005. The legislation broadened the provisions of previous laws making it illegal to wear, manufacture or sell any unearned military decorations or medals by also making it illegal to falsely report or represent oneself as having received any military decoration or medal. On 28 June 2012 the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled in *U.S. v. Alvarez*, by a 6-3 decision, that the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 was an unconstitutional abridgment of “freedom of speech” afforded all U.S. citizens under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Both Representative Joe Heck (R-NV-03) and Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) are now seeking support for their bills, H.R. 258 and S. 210 respectively, understanding that SCOTUS’ ruling is an act of preservation of constitutional rights.

**Action Required:** Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 258, introduced by Representative Joe Heck (R-NV-03), and S. 210, introduced by Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), the Stolen Valor Act, which would make it a crime to benefit or profit from lying about military service.

**Details (To Be Put Into Letter):**

As the recent Supreme Court of the United States’ (SCOTUS) ruling conveys, a U.S. citizen’s constitutional right to freedom of speech shall not be infringed upon, unless that speech is harmful to others. While understanding SCOTUS’ ruling on *U.S. v. Alvarez*, and fully supporting any measure to uphold the rights afforded U.S. citizens under the U.S. Constitution, it is important to vigorously promote any laws that would hinder the dishonest few who take advantage of the honor associated with false claims of acts of valor for financial/tangible gain.

H.R. 258 and S. 210 hold great importance to the men and women who volunteered to fight for their nation’s values and ideals. Decorated servicemembers face having their service and recognition for their bravery threatened by a growing collection of individuals who, in a dishonest act, deceive others about an honor they do not rightfully have. The cosponsors of the bills understand that SCOTUS’ ruling leaves open a door to prosecute the falsification of acts of heroism, by focusing on those who aim to, “benefit or profit from falsified accounts of personal valor.” This legislation makes it a federal crime to lie about receiving a military decoration or medal, like the Medal of

Honor, in order to profit or benefit financially, such as lying to receive veteran or health care benefits, to obtaining a government contract, or getting a job otherwise reserved for a decorated veteran (thus harming a decorated veterans' opportunities for work). Passage of these bills will show Congress' continued support for the valorous acts of our nation's men and women, while staying in-line with the constitutional rights and values these servicemembers have dedicated to protect.

**Take Action:** Click the "Take Action" link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the 'Details' section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN's website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at [Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org](mailto:Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org).