

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Urges VA to allow groups to place flags on gravesites ahead of Memorial Day

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GREEN BAY, WI — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) today sent a letter to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie and Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves urging them to allow groups to continue the longstanding tradition of placing flags at VA cemeteries ahead of Memorial Day. The letter comes after the Department of Veterans Affairs last week [prohibited](#) “group placement of flags at gravesites” due to concerns regarding the Coronavirus.

Gallagher wrote, “While I understand the need to limit mass gatherings and follow CDC guidelines, I urge you to reconsider the recent Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decision to prohibit the mass placement of flags at VA cemeteries...Every year, numerous flags are placed at graves across the nation as a reminder of the ultimate sacrifice paid by our nation’s heroes. This display of patriotism comes together with careful planning and organization. I hope that communities and local groups can work with the VA to follow guidelines and continue this tradition to help honor our heroes this Memorial Day.”

The full letter is available [HERE](#) and found below.

Dear Secretary Wilkie and Under Secretary Reeves:

As we approach Memorial Day weekend, Americans from communities across the nation will join together to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country. Even amidst the current coronavirus crisis, patriotic Americans in communities like Northeast Wisconsin still wish to come together to safely honor the fallen and continue the tradition of placing flags on the graves of service members.

While I understand the need to limit mass gatherings and follow CDC guidelines, I urge you to reconsider the recent Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decision to prohibit the mass placement of flags at VA cemeteries. I believe the fallen can be honored while adhering safely to state, local, and CDC guidelines. For example, recently members of my community in Northeast Wisconsin and a local American Legion Post came together safely by following CDC guidelines to place flags on gravesites at private cemeteries.

Every year, numerous flags are placed at graves across the nation as a reminder of the ultimate sacrifice paid by our nation's heroes. This display of patriotism comes together with careful planning and organization. I hope that communities and local groups can work with the VA to follow guidelines and continue this tradition to help honor our heroes this Memorial Day.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Gallagher

Member of Congress