

VIOLATION: RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

I am a member of the Nation Guard and served my tour in Iraq. I came home last December. I have no visible scars but what I experienced changed me. What I experience when I returned home has too. To receive medical and mental health services has been a nightmare of epic proportions. Nobody made me join the guard...I believed in serving my country. But all the flag waving and heartfelt thanks are wearing me down. I don't want your praise; I want what I fought for: my rights.

I waited four months to get my first appointment at the Atlanta VA only to have it canceled and rescheduled twice. As of today I have had psych services only two times. I am afraid to take more time off to go to Atlanta because I worry I might lose my job if my employer thinks I am not right in the head. I have deep seated anger boiling inside which is threatening my relationships with my family, my employer, and my country. I am disillusioned with the America I now see.

When I left, I was promised by me employer that my job would be here when I returned. But the job I was given when I returned is not he job I had worked many years to reach. My pay has been cut by ¼ and I hate to complain because the people who worked at another plant here in town have lost their jobs when the plant closed in September.

I would like to have come to speak in person, but I can not risk it. I am still in the Guard and may be deployed again to Iraq or Afghanistan. I worry what this will do to my family. The last time was so hard on my wife and daughters. We almost lost our house. We would have if her family and the local 278th support group had not chipped in.

I hope that this commission will listen and act. America is a great country but what they do to men and women in service to this country is wrong.