

Chairman Waxman,

My name is Tracy Grogan, wife of CW2 Travis Grogan. My husband was deployed to Afghanistan in 2004 during OEF with the 25th ID from Hawaii. He was a Kiowa Warrior Pilot who loved to fly his helicopter and was proud to serve in the Army and in Afghanistan.

Travis' squadron, 3/4 Cav, was stationed in Shindand, Afghanistan. He had gone to Bagram to attend a meeting about redeployment for he was one of the movement officers for the Cavalry. On the 27th of November 2004 he boarded the Blackwater aircraft to return to Shindand from Bagram. As you can guess, they never made it back. According to the reports from the DOD and NTSB, the aircraft crew flew a different direction than the expected route, flew into a boxed canyon and crashed while trying to get out. Everyone on board was killed, not because of hostile fire or bad weather or a faulty aircraft. They were killed because Blackwater didn't follow the rules on which they were hired. This tragedy happened because of a neglect and blatant disregard for FAA and DOD regulations. The DOD contract stated that the company must operate in accordance with Part 135 specifications...evidence shows that they didn't follow the rules when it came to the use of flight plans, supplemental oxygen, flight locating and many other things. The FAA failed to oversee Presidential Airways/Blackwater and the DOD failed to make sure the private contractor they hired to do a job was actually doing the job by the rules to make sure our soldiers/my husband were safe.

Because of the carelessness of Blackwater/Presidential Airways I am left without my husband, my best friend and my way of life. I so miss wondering where we will be stationed next. I miss the excitement of military life. I am left to raise our children in suburbia as a single parent. I am left to do everything on my own. My two children are left without a father to love them and protect them and make them feel safe like only a dad can do. I can't tell you how many times a week I still get the question from my kids, "Why did Daddy have to die?" Our little family is left with a huge void that I fear will never be filled.

There needs to be steps taken to ensure that carelessness like this doesn't happen again. The contractors hired by our government to assist our military personnel need to have supervision to make sure we as Americans are getting what we pay for. To make sure that the rules set in place, especially for safety, are followed. There also needs to be prosecution for those contractors who blatantly do not follow the rules and risk the safety of our soldiers, who may I add go in harms way voluntarily. To this day, there has been no justice for my husband or our little family.

Tracy Grogan