

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

May 13, 2026

The Honorable Hung Cao
Acting Secretary of the Navy
U.S. Department of the Navy
1200 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Acting Secretary Cao:

I write to ask that you conduct a comprehensive public investigation into the ways that the Navy's organizational culture, policies and the chain of command's response contributed to the death of my constituent, Seaman Angelina Petra Resendiz in May of 2025.

As you know, Seaman Resendiz was tragically killed near Naval Station Norfolk. One sailor has been charged in connection with her death and is expected go on trial soon. Despite early warnings from her colleagues, friends, and family following her disappearance on May 29, 2025, the U.S. Navy initially classified Resendiz as "Unauthorized Absence" instead of "Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown" which delayed the start of a formal investigation and contributed to Seaman Resendiz's death.

On July 10, 2025, I sent to a letter to your predecessor, former Secretary John C. Phelan, alongside 16 of my colleagues, asking for additional information into the conditions that led to the tragic death of Seaman Resendiz and the Navy's handling of her chain of command's response to credible concerns about her whereabouts.¹ While I appreciated former Secretary Phelan's September 2, 2025, response letter where he confirmed that "[t]he Navy is committed to examining the circumstances and organizational response..." to the disappearance and subsequent death of Seaman Resendiz, many important questions remain unanswered.²

We have a responsibility to protect our brave service members who take an oath to defend our country. That is why I respectfully request that following the conclusion of the trial you conduct a broad and comprehensive investigation into the events that contributed to the death of Seaman Resendiz and review where the breakdown in her chain of command was. I also ask that you commit to publicly releasing the results of this investigation. An independent inquiry into this case would help ensure that no family ever has to endure the same pain and uncertainty as the Resendiz family.

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

Sincerely,



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

¹ Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (2025, July 10). *Letter to Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan*. U.S. House of Representatives.

² Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan (2025, September 2). *Letter to Congressman Vicente Gonzalez*. Office of the Secretary of the Navy.