

115TH CONGRESS

CASEWORK



REPORT

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What We Do

Congresswoman Barragán's top priority is serving the people of California's 44th Congressional District. The federal agencies can be a complex maze that many of our constituents get lost or stuck in. Congresswoman Barragán's caseworkers in her district office help constituents navigate the federal agencies with any problems or requests they may have.

During the 115th Congress, our office helped hundreds of constituents, 839 to be exact, in the 44th Congressional District. We have saved them over \$640,000 and helped them receive over \$440,000 - for a total of \$1,091,210. The issues we have helped constituents with range from veterans receiving back pay to navigating immigration issues.

This Casework Report highlights some of the stories of our constituents that we have helped over the past two years. Our caseworkers answered numerous calls and worked diligently to try to resolve issues for constituents with the federal agencies.

Some examples of the agencies we work with include: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Social Security Administration (SSA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Education (ED), Department of Defense (DOD), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and many others.

Constituents in need of assistance are encouraged to contact the San Pedro office by calling (310) 831-1799 or by visiting Congresswoman Barragán's website at <https://barragan.house.gov/help-with-a-federal-agency/>.

Casework Testimonials

Below are a few inspiring stories of how we've helped constituents navigate through the red tape. In the following testimonials, some pseudonyms are used to protect people's privacy.

Department of the Army

Daniel Nadeau from San Pedro

"I would like to thank Congresswoman Barragan and her wonderful staff for assisting me. I was held up in a promotion process for 2 years. I could not get a straight answer on the status of my promotion packet. Congresswoman Barragan's office did an inquiry on my behalf and got an answer where my packet was in the process and a date it should be complete. They followed through on it for me and my promotion was finally published with my original date of Rank. Congresswoman Barragan heard my cry and answered it."

Mr. Nadeau contacted our office back in October 2017 regarding a pending promotion that he had not received an update on for two years. Mr. Nadeau was ranked Second Lieutenant, and after multiple attempts and correspondences with the Department of the Army, we notified Mr. Nadeau of his new promotion to First Lieutenant in June 2018.

Department of Education (ED)

Douglas Spoons from San Pedro

Mr. Spoons reached out to our office because he received a correspondence from the Department of Education that said he owed a total of \$356,994 because of a Federal Student Aid loan he had taken out in the amount of \$75,000 many years ago. Mr. Spoons is a Veteran who was subjected to water contamination while stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina and due to this he had previously been granted a waiver for all of his loans. He was notified via mail by the loan service provider, NelNet, that he owed the above-mentioned amount of money which included interest. Our office submitted an inquiry on his behalf and we were able to successfully get the Department of Education to return the loans in question back to Disability Status so that they could be discharged accordingly.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Hector Barajas from Compton



Our office assisted Mr. Barajas, a deported U.S. Army Veteran, with his naturalization process. Mr. Barajas had been living in Mexico for the past 14 years. We contacted USCIS and inquired about his naturalization application. Congresswoman Barragán wrote a letter of support for his application to be a U.S. citizen along with other Members of Congress. Mr. Barajas was sworn in to become a United States citizen on April 13, 2018. He was the first known deported veteran to become naturalized as a U.S. citizen.

Karina Sanchez from North Long Beach

Ms. Sanchez contacted our office because her immigration attorney did not want to give her an update regarding her immigration case even though she paid in full for their services. Ms. Sanchez asked us to contact USCIS to find out if her attorney had submitted her application and the payment. USCIS responded by stating that they had not received an application nor the payment. Ms. Sanchez immediately contacted her attorney and demanded that her application be submitted along with payment. Ms. Sanchez called our office and was so grateful that we could find out what was going on with her application.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Michael Thomas from North Long Beach

Mr. Thomas contacted our office because he was having an issue with getting Medicare to cover an emergency medical visit that he underwent at a private facility in November 2016. Mr. Thomas initially filed a claim with the VA to cover the medical costs incurred during this hospital visit, but it was denied, so we submitted an inquiry to Medicare on his behalf. After submitting our inquiry, they responded that they would be covering \$3,849 of his medical costs.

Stacy Smith from Carson

Ms. Smith reached out to our office because she was having an issue with getting Medicare to cover her preferred treatment medication for her heart condition. Our office submitted an inquiry on her behalf to Medicare along with a letter from her Doctor which advised this specific medication as the best course of treatment. After providing this evidence to Medicare we were able to get Ms. Smith's preferred heart medication approved successfully.

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Vanessa Thompson from Compton

Ms. Thompson's family contacted our office regarding her appeal hearing with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Ms. Thompson was granted an appeal hearing, but SSA was not giving them an exact date for the hearing. With our office's assistance, Ms. Thompson received an expedited hearing because she was facing extreme financial hardship, and her SSI benefits were restored. She will be receiving a total amount of \$21,840 for the next two years.

Steven Jackson from Watts

Mr. Jackson came to our office because he was having difficulty obtaining his Social Security card number for more than 7 years. We assisted him by gathering relevant evidence to prove his identity. Once Mr. Jackson compiled the necessary documents, we submitted an inquiry to the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SSA accepted his documents and provided him with a social security number. He was then able to get his California identification card and a U.S. Passport.

Benjamin Anderson from Carson

Mr. Anderson reached out to our office in September 2018 because the Social Security Administration (SSA) granted him back pay in November 2017. After that date, he had not heard anything from SSA regarding the back pay he was entitled to receive. Our office reached out on his behalf and we were able to successfully get the funds released to him in a matter of weeks. In October 2018, we were notified that Mr. Anderson would finally get awarded his back pay from SSA for \$5,864.

Oscar Olivares from South Gate

Oscar Olivares is a South Gate resident who is chronically ill and is admitted to the hospital routinely to receive medical treatment and blood transfusions. His needed assistance with receiving his back pay from his disability benefits from 2014. We were able to assist him with receiving his back pay for \$83,689.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Rachel Robinson from Watts

Ms. Robinson was in urgent need for her non-profit organization to be reinstated as a 501(c)(3). On the IRS website, her non-profit organization appeared as revoked for not submitting tax returns in 2012. With the assistance of the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service, Ms. Robinson's non-profit status was successfully reinstated. The organization was able to continue offering the programming they provide to young people in Watts, Willowbrook, Compton, and Carson. The nonprofit educates young adults about the tools for running a successful small business.

Asjae Woodard from Carson

Ms. Woodard contacted our office because she was attempting to apply for financial aid through FAFSA so that she could pay for her college courses, but she needed to provide FAFSA with her most recent tax return. She attempted to request her tax return numerous times from the IRS but was unsuccessful. Our office submitted an inquiry to the IRS about this and we were able to get the tax return sent to her in less than two weeks so that she would not be dropped from her classes.

Ricardo Cruz from Wilmington

Mr. Cruz contacted our office because he inputted the wrong bank account information on his personal income tax return. Our office contacted the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service to let them know that Mr. Cruz made a mistake. With our help, Mr. Cruz was able to fix his mistake and get his tax return promptly.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Lowell Maffei from San Pedro

“After a year of frustration, I had little progress. Someone told me to contact my local Congresswoman. I did, and they couldn’t have been nicer or helpful with my VA Compensation case. Their help was valuable and lifted my spirits. Anybody that has any issues with the VA or any federal issue, contact your local member of Congress. Thank you to Congresswoman Barragan and staff for your diligence and kindness.”

Lowell Maffei is a disabled veteran who contacted our office because the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was asking him to pay a total of \$24,481 due to a supposed overpayment for his spouse. Through our office’s assistance, he was able to provide the VA with extensive proof that he was in fact married during the time in question. The VA decided that Mr. Maffei would only be responsible for \$2,925, saving him a total of \$21,556.

William Shaw from Carson

Mr. Shaw reached out to our office for assistance with getting back pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for some recently approved medical conditions. Mr. Shaw was approved for both Diabetes and Hypertension dating back to an effective date of 1976. After our office submitted an inquiry on his behalf, Mr. Shaw was finally awarded back pay for all his of conditions for \$13,862.

Brady Greenberg from San Pedro

“Thank you to Congresswoman Barragan and staff, you helped me so much through the veterans claims process allowing my dreams of homeownership come true.”



Mr. Greenberg contacted our office because the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) was not being responsive with his home loan application. The home he was going to buy was scheduled to go back on the market very soon. With the assistance of our office, we helped Mr. Greenberg get approved for his home loan one day before the deadline. The VA approved a loan of \$350,000 for Mr. Greenberg to purchase his dream home.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Angela Williams from Willowbrook

Ms. Williams reached out to our office for assistance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Ms. Williams was homeless and in urgent need of housing. Our office assisted Ms. Williams with receiving a one-year voucher for \$16,188.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Richard Williams from Carson

Mr. Williams reached out to our office because he had a pending disability request with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and wanted to know the status of it since he had not heard anything in almost a year. Our office submitted an inquiry to OPM, and they approved Mr. Williams' disability claim.

Department of State

Legacy High School Students (South Gate)



S.T.E.A.M Legacy High School engineering students placed in the Hydrogen Horizons Automotive Challenge (H2AC) and were planning to participate at the World Competition for H2AC in Germany. They reached out to our office because seven of their students needed passports to make the trip. Our office assisted the students by reaching out to the Department of State to expedite their passport applications. All of the students received their passports just in time for their trip to Germany to participate in the competition. The students ended up placing first in automotive design and fuel efficiency at the H2AC.

