
LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of Lawyers Defending American Democracy and the more than 5,000 people who have added their signature in support, we ask you to recognize an American hero, Yevgeny “Eugene” Vindman, by allowing him to retire as a colonel when he leaves military service on August 31, 2022.

Col. Vindman served on the National Security Council due to his experience as a national security lawyer and ethics counsel. On July 25, 2019, his twin brother, Alex Vindman, listened in on President Donald Trump’s now infamous telephone call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Following the call, Alex Vindman sought national security and ethics advice from his brother, Eugene. Together, they reported the call’s potential legal violations and harm to national security to their superiors.

Their disclosure of this call eventually resulted in the first impeachment of the former president. On February 7, 2020 - two days after the Senate acquitted former president Trump of his impeachment charges - both men were escorted out of the White House. Their promotions to Colonel were delayed. Alex retired. Eugene received a career-damaging negative performance review from a superior who, one year earlier, described him as the best military lawyer and officer he had ever worked with in his evaluation. The Army’s Inspector General subsequently found that Col. Vindman was the object of improper retaliation, thus confirming that his treatment was improper and undermined the rule of law.

The Army ultimately processed the long-delayed promotion for Eugene, but assigned him to a career-backwater, making little use of his expertise. Eugene could and should have been assigned to the State Department to investigate Russian war crimes in Ukraine, or some other post that would have used his talents on behalf of our nation and further developed his career. As the Army IG’s report predicted, the retaliation irreversibly damaged his military career.

Recognizing that he had no prospects for utilizing his expertise in the military, Eugene will officially retire on August 31, 2022. His one goal, as he faces a retirement he would not have chosen had his career not been thwarted, is to retire with the rank of Colonel. This would require, by statute, that you approve a waiver of the requirement that he serve three years in rank prior to retirement; he has served more than a year as Colonel. A waiver would not raise his pension, rather, it would provide him with only the honor and recognition due for his service to the country.

We ask that you grant this waiver and allow Col. Vindman to retain his hard-earned title as he retires.

[On behalf of the more than five-thousand individuals who signed in support of this letter](#), we respectfully note that, in granting this waiver, you will reinforce a critical message: those who stand up with courage for the constitution and the rule of law will be rewarded, and retaliation will not be tolerated.

We appreciate your consideration of this important and time-sensitive request.

Sincerely,

Scott Harshbarger

Chairman & Co-Founder, Lawyers Defending American Democracy

Former National President of Common Cause

Two-term Attorney General of Massachusetts

Lauren Stiller Rikleen

Executive Director, Lawyers Defending American Democracy

President, Rikleen Institute for Strategic Leadership

To see the list of over 5,000 additional signers in support of this request, please see:

<https://ldad.org/letters-briefs/eugene-vindman>