



## Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

December 10, 2014

Mr. Bob Iger, Chairman and CEO  
The Walt Disney Company  
500 South Buena Vista Street  
Burbank, CA 91521-0001

Dear Mr. Iger:

Perhaps you are unaware that The Disney Company is delivering a daily slap in the face to thousands of commissioned officers of one of this country's uniformed services: the commissioned officers of the United States Public Health Service (PHS). I am confident that this insult is unintentional and arises from a lack of understanding of who these officers are and what they do for this country.

The "slap in the face" to which I am referring is the characterization of officers in the USPHS as "Other military supporters," not entitled to the military "Salute" rate when it comes special admission prices at Disney properties. These officers are much more than "Other military supporters." They are full-fledged members of one of this country's seven uniformed services, and they stand beside their armed and uniformed brethren in protecting this country.

You have undoubtedly heard of the U.S. Surgeon General, a Presidentially-appointed individual who wears a Vice Admiral's rank and uniform. What you may not know is that there are 6700 other commissioned officers who report to the Surgeon General, and they, too, wear military uniforms and carry military rank, receive military pay and benefits, receive military veteran status, and are subject to deployments both in this country and overseas. Over 1000 of these officers deployed in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and Super Storm Sandy, almost 900 deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and 70 of them are in Liberia, right now, putting their lives on the line staffing an Ebola treatment facility that provides patient care to Liberian healthcare workers. They are the only U.S. government medical personnel actually on the ground treating Ebola patients in West Africa. They are eligible to use and participate in all Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs administered by the Defense Department, including the "Shades of Green" facility at Disney World.

So, I am sure why you can see why officers in the Public Health Service bristle when they are lumped in with Defense Department contractors, involuntarily separated servicemembers, and Defense Department civilians. They believe that they have earned the right to be treated by The Disney Company the same as their military counterparts. Let's be candid about my request, Mr. Iger. There are only 6700 commissioned officers currently on active duty with the U.S. Public Health Service, plus 6500 who served twenty years and retired, resulting in a total of 13,200 new PHS potential users of the Disney "military" discount. This compares with 2.45 million active duty and reserve component military servicemembers and 2 million military retirees who are fully eligible for military discounts at Disney properties (4.45 million total). As you can see, the financial impact on Disney of adding this well-deserved recognition to officers of the US Public Health Service would be so minimal as to be completely unnoticed within the \$48.8 billion in revenue and the \$8.0 billion in net income Disney enjoyed in Fiscal Year 2014.

I ask you to please consider this minor change in Disney policies as a way of recognizing these fine officers, who do so much for this country but who are so often overlooked.

Sincerely,

Col. James T. Currie, USA (ret.)  
Executive Director