



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 11, 2004

Mr. Robert G. Davis
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
USAA
USAA Building
San Antonio, TX 78288

Dear Mr. Davis:

As Secretary of a Department of the U.S. Government that employs Foreign Service Officers both at home and abroad, I wish to express my great concern regarding your company's recent decision to exclude certain members of the Foreign Service from USAA eligibility. This reverses the long-standing policy of your organization to accept for membership all commissioned Foreign Service officers in addition to officers commissioned for military service. I understand that the heads of other foreign affairs agencies also will be writing to you.

A policy of refusing membership to Foreign Service officers who work at agencies whose mandates do not directly mention national security is unfortunate. All Foreign Service Officers, regardless of their home agency, have sworn to defend and protect the constitution of the United States and I believe they should be treated as one whole corps of United States government employees.

The latest United States National Security Strategy specifically mentions trade as one of the lynchpins of U.S. national security. The dedicated ranks of Foreign Service officers, such as those who work for the Department of Commerce in the Foreign Commercial Service, are therefore essential to ensuring American security in these increasingly volatile times.

I urge you to reconsider USAA's policy. I hope that commissioned Foreign Service officers from all U.S. agencies can be treated equally. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Evans