

February 27, 2018

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Russell Senate Building, Room 228  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Russell Senate Building, Room 228  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

As you work to develop your respective versions of the fiscal year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we encourage you to refrain from including any language that would have a detrimental impact on research at the Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) and other medical research conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Last year, the fiscal year 2018 NDAA reported by the Senate Committee on Armed Services and ultimately approved by the Senate included provisions that would have individually and collectively restricted, if not outright prohibited, medical research on diseases and disorders that affect our nation's men and women who serve or have served in the U.S. Armed Services. These provisions (sections 733, 891, 892, and 893 of the Senate bill) would have restricted the types of research that could be funded, and added burdensome contracting and auditing requirements designed for large weapons system contracts. Moreover, one of these provisions (Section 733) would have affected all medical research at DoD, not just the CDMRP.

In response to the inclusion of this language last year, the U.S. Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command issued a memorandum that stated:

*"This language will impact force readiness and medical providers' readiness.... Impacts on military medical training programs will negatively affect the readiness of our military health care providers."*

Because the Senate version of the bill is not marked-up in public, our organizations did not have a chance to respond to this language until after the bill was reported from committee. Furthermore, an amendment to remove this language was filed in the Senate and cosponsored by more than half of the Senate, but was not given a vote on

Letter to Chairs/Ranking Members  
House and Senate Armed Services Committees  
February 27, 2018  
Page 2

the Senate floor. After passage of the bill, "Dear Colleague" letters asking for removal of this language in the House-Senate conference were circulated and signed by 54 Senators and 180 Representatives.

Thankfully, the final version of the FY18 NDAA did not include this language. This result was due in large part to an arduous four-month advocacy campaign by your constituents, who expended an enormous amount of time and energy to defeat language that a clear Majority in Congress opposed from the outset.

The strong level of bipartisan Congressional support for the defense health research programs is a beacon of hope to the military families, retirees, veterans and civilians who must cope with these diseases and disorders. We urge you to honor their concerns and refrain from including in this year's NDAA any language that would restrict medical research at DoD.

We appreciate your prompt and urgent consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

AcademyHealth  
Action to Cure Kidney Cancer  
Adult Congenital Heart Association  
ALS Association  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Association of Clinical Urologists  
American Brain Tumor Association  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Liver Foundation  
American Psychological Association  
American Urological Association  
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation  
Arthritis Foundation  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Letter to Chairs/Ranking Members  
House and Senate Armed Services Committees  
February 27, 2018  
Page 3

Autism Speaks  
Beyond Celiac  
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network  
Children's National Health System  
Children's Tumor Foundation  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy  
Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)  
Critical Mass: The Young Adult Cancer Alliance  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
CureHHT  
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer  
debra of America  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Duke University  
Duke University School of Medicine  
Dystonia Advocacy Network  
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered  
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne  
GBS|CIDP Foundation International  
Global Health Technologies Coalition  
Indiana University  
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders  
Interstitial Cystitis Association  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
Hydrocephalus Association  
Indiana University  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
International Myeloma Foundation  
Kidney Cancer Action Network  
Kidney Cancer Association  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Littlest Tumor Foundation  
Living Beyond Breast Cancer  
Lung Cancer Alliance  
LUNGevity Foundation  
Lupus Foundation of America

Letter to Chairs/Ranking Members  
House and Senate Armed Services Committees  
February 27, 2018  
Page 4

Lymphoma Research Foundation  
Malaria No More  
Malecare Cancer Support  
Marfan Foundation  
METAvivor  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
Muscular Dystrophy Association  
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research  
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions  
National Autism Association  
National Brain Tumor Society  
National Fragile X Foundation  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)  
NephCure Kidney International  
Neurofibromatosis Midwest  
Neurofibromatosis Network  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network  
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy  
Penn State University  
Prostate Cancer Foundation  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Research!America  
Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation  
Scleroderma Foundation  
The Sergeant Sullivan Circle  
Sleep Research Society  
Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Stony Brook University  
Susan G. Komen  
TB Alliance  
Texas NF Foundation  
Theresa's Research Foundation  
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance  
University of California System  
University of Hawaii

Letter to Chairs/Ranking Members  
House and Senate Armed Services Committees  
February 27, 2018  
Page 5

University of Iowa  
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Virginia School of Medicine  
US Hereditary Angioedema Foundation  
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education & Support  
Vanderbilt University  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Veterans for Common Sense  
The Veterans Health Council  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Wayne State University  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer

cc: Members of the House and Senate

Enclosure: Military Relevance of Defense Health Research Programs