

July 27, 2017

The Honorable John McCain  
United States Senator  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senator  
Ranking Minority Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed,

The undersigned organizations and institutions urge you to support the bipartisan Durbin-Blunt amendment to nullify several provisions related to medical research included in S. 1519, the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. As reported by the Senate Armed Services Committee, S. 1519 would have the effect of severely restricting, and in some cases terminating, critical medical research programs funded by the Department of Defense (DoD).

Specifically, S. 1519 would prohibit funding for medical research by DoD unless such research meets very narrowly defined criteria. If enacted, this language could jeopardize funding for research activities that have broader relevance to the U.S. military, including the health and well-being of military families and veterans, and the efficiency of the military health care system. Additional language in the bill would place unnecessary and burdensome red-tape acquisition compliance and auditing requirements on programs that are already serving the taxpayer well.

The medical research programs at DoD directly impact the health and lives of the U.S. military, including combat veterans and their families. They include important medical research programs related to cancer, rare disorders, and infectious diseases. Grants awarded through these programs have led to breakthroughs on nerve regeneration and traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – research that has impacted our newest wounded warriors. Other programs provide groundbreaking research on psychological health, Gulf War Illness, spinal cord injury, and hearing and vision loss (which comprise a significant portion of current battlefield injuries). Many of these diseases, injuries and conditions occur at greater rates in those who have served in the military.

Defense health research grants undergo rigorous merit review from both scientific and consumer review panels, and are awarded competitively based in large part on their innovative qualities as well as scientific merit and relevance to the U.S. military.

During floor consideration of S. 1519, we urge the Senate to support the Durbin-Blunt amendment to nullify this language from the bill and also support continued investments in the medical research programs at DoD.

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Sincerely,

Action to Cure Kidney Cancer  
Adult Congenital Heart Association  
The ALS Association  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association of Clinical Urologists  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Brain Tumor Association  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Diabetes Association  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Lung Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
American Urological Association  
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation  
Arthritis Foundation  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Autism Speaks  
Beyond Celiac  
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network  
Caring Together, Inc.  
Children's Heart Foundation  
Children's National Health System  
Children's Tumor Foundation  
Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
CureHHT  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute  
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer  
debra of America  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Duke University  
Duke University School of Medicine  
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation

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Fight Colorectal Cancer  
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered  
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne  
GBS|CIDP Foundation International  
Global Health Technologies Coalition  
Hepatitis Foundation International  
HIV Medicine Association  
Hydrocephalus Association  
International Foundation for Functional GI Disorders  
International Myeloma Foundation  
Interstitial Cystitis Association  
Johns Hopkins University  
Littlest Tumor Foundation  
Living Beyond Breast Cancer  
Lung Cancer Alliance  
Lupus Foundation of America  
Lupus Research Alliance  
Lymphoma Research Foundation  
Malaria No More  
Malecare Cancer Support  
Marfan Foundation  
Melanoma Research Foundation  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation  
Michigan State University  
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 Gulf War Resource Center  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Vietnam and Gulf War Veterans Coalition  
NephCure Kidney International  
Neurofibromatosis Network  
Neurofibromatosis Northeast  
NF Midwest  
NYU Langone Health  
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network  
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD)

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Penn State University  
Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC)  
Prostate Cancer Foundation  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Research!America  
Scleroderma Foundation  
Sergeant Sullivan Circle  
Sleep Research Society  
Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Susan G. Komen  
Texas Neurofibromatosis Foundation  
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance  
UC San Diego  
University of Arizona Cancer Center at Dignity Healthy  
    St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center  
University of California System  
University of Iowa  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Vermont  
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association  
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education & Support  
Vanderbilt University  
Veterans for Common Sense  
Veterans Health Council  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer

cc: United States Senators

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[mvieth@dc-crd.com](mailto:mvieth@dc-crd.com)