

September 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and
Minority Leader Schumer:

We, the undersigned organizations urge you to work toward the enactment of the fiscal year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act, to ensure that the Defense Health Research Programs, including the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP), are fully funded in fiscal year 2021.

Our organizations understand that Congress may need to pass a short-term continuing resolution to prevent a government shutdown on October 1. However, we are particularly concerned about the possibility of Congress enacting a year-long continuing resolution in lieu of completing the fiscal year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act. Under a year-long continuing resolution **the CDMRP would receive no funding in fiscal year 2021**. Failure to enact the Defense Appropriations Act will have major negative health implications for the millions of Americans – especially veterans, military service members and their families – who live with chronic and debilitating disorders. This will delay important new discoveries and translation of medical innovation into new treatments and cures for many disorders.

We collectively represent millions of American veterans, military retirees, military families, and civilians who benefit from the ongoing research funded by the Defense Health Research Programs at the Department of Defense (DoD). We have worked tirelessly to advocate for continued funding for the programs, and we were pleased to see that the House version of the fiscal year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act includes strong funding levels for medical research.

The Defense Health Research Programs will be unable to fully prepare for the fiscal year 2021 grant solicitation process until they receive a fully-enacted fiscal year 2021 budget. The CDMRP annually receives more than 12,000 pre-applications and 7,000 full applications for grants and undergoes a rigorous process to evaluate and fund the best of these applications. Further delay in enacting the fiscal year 2021 appropriations bill will create unnecessary disruption with internal processes at DoD.

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These delays will have systemic impacts on the way the DoD convenes programmatic panels to identify and implement programmatic changes and peer-review panels to provide thorough review of grant applications, and ultimately impact the ability of the DoD to conduct appropriate negotiations to award fiscal year 2021 grants. Further, failure to enact a fully-funded fiscal year 2021 budget will compromise the ability of scientific laboratories across the U.S to effectively plan and prepare the highest quality grant applications, potentially diminishing opportunities to maintain discovery-based research programs and disrupting critical scientific workforces.

The CDMRP is a critical component of the Defense Appropriations Act, and failure to enact this legislation will have a devastating impact on the program. Aside from the obvious biomedical and economic consequences of such actions, such as stalling or eliminating the critical development of new and more effective therapies that lower costs and save lives, failure to enact will interrupt important pipelines that have allowed investigators at U.S. medical research institutions to build careers and act on new and innovative medical research ideas.

We therefore urge you to work together in a bipartisan, bicameral spirit and enact the fiscal year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,

Action to Cure Kidney Cancer
ALS Association
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Neurology
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Dental Research
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Brain Tumor Association
American College of Rheumatology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Microbiology
American Urological Association
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation
APS Foundation of America, Inc

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Arthritis Foundation
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Batten Disease Support and Research Association
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Bridge the Gap – Syngap Education and Research Foundation
Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis
Burn Pits 360 Veterans Organization
Cancer ABCs
Charlie Foundation
Child Neurology Foundation
Children’s Tumor Foundation
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE)
Coalition for National Security Research
Colorectal Cancer Alliance
Cure HHT
Danny Did Foundation
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
debra of America
Duke Health
Duke University
Epilepsy Foundation
Epilepsy Leadership Council
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne
George Mason University
Global Health Technologies Coalition
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
Harvard University
Hepatitis B Foundation
HIV Medicine Association
Indiana University
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Myeloma Foundation
International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation
KidneyCAN

Kidney Cancer Association
LAM Foundation
LGS Foundation
Littlest Tumor Foundation
Living Beyond Breast Cancer
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Melanoma Research Foundation
Miami Project to Cure Paralysis
Michigan State University
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Autism Association
National Brain Tumor Society
National Fragile X Foundation
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Pancreas Foundation
National Vietnam and Gulf War Veterans Coalition
Neurofibromatosis Midwest
Neurofibromatosis Network
Neurofibromatosis Northeast
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
PKD Foundation
Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Prostate Conditions Education Council
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation
Research!America
Scleroderma Foundation
Sergeant Sullivan Circle
SHEPHERD Foundation
Sjögren's Foundation
SLC6A1 Connect
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen
Texas NF Foundation
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
University of Central Florida

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University of Iowa
Veterans for Common Sense
VHL Alliance
Wayne State University
Weill Cornell Medicine
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer

cc: House and Senate Committee on Appropriations