

July 26, 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.

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 Orthopedic 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
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)
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 Health
 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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