

December, 2019

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:

The undersigned organizations urge you to complete final negotiations on the fiscal year 2020 Defense Appropriations Act and move the bill expeditiously through the House and Senate toward enactment. Any further delay in completing the fiscal year 2020 defense budget, or subjecting the defense budget to a long-term continuing resolution, will inflict irreversible damage on the Defense Health Research Programs, including the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, at the Department of Defense (DoD).

We are particularly concerned about the possibility of Congress enacting a long-term continuing resolution in lieu of a fiscal year 2020 Defense Appropriations Act. **We have been informed by the Department of the Defense that, under this scenario, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs would receive no funding in fiscal year 2020.** Failure to enact a final bill will have major negative health implications for the millions of Americans – especially veterans – suffering from 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 DoD. We have worked tirelessly to advocate for continued funding for the programs, and we were pleased to see that both the House and Senate versions of the fiscal year 2020 Defense Appropriations Act include strong funding levels for medical research.

The Defense Health Research Programs will be unable to fully prepare for the fiscal year 2020 grant solicitation process until they receive a fully-enacted fiscal year 2020 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 FY20 budget will create unnecessary instability and uncertainty in the grant solicitation, grant review, and grant making processes at DoD. This will also delay the ability of DoD to most effectively convene programmatic panels to identify and implement programmatic changes,

effectively convene peer-review panels to provide thorough review of grant applications, and conduct appropriate negotiations to ultimately award FY20 grants. Further, failure to enact a fully-funded fiscal year 2020 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.

We are also very encouraged to see that House and Senate negotiators have agreed to 302(b) allocations for each of the twelve appropriations bills, and we understand that formal conference negotiations may now proceed. Continued delay in enacting these bills, including the fiscal year 2020 Defense Appropriations Act, increases the risk that the defense budget will be subjected to a year-long continuing resolution, which could result in no grants awarded during the entire duration of the fiscal year. 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.

Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have worked hard to make important policy and funding decisions for the defense health programs included in their respective versions of the FY20 Defense Appropriations Act. However, these efforts, and those made by the American research community to prepare for new research opportunities, will be wasted if Congress does not complete its work. We therefore urge you to work together in a bipartisan, bicameral spirit and complete the fiscal year 2020 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Action to Cure Kidney Cancer
ALS Association
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Dental Research
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA)
American Brain Tumor Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Rheumatology
American Diabetes Association
American Gastroenterological Association

American Psychological Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene
American Thoracic Society
American Urological Association
Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation
APS Foundation of America, Inc.
Arthritis Foundation
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
ASME
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Beyond Celiac
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis
Cancer ABCs
Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation
Children's Tumor Foundation
Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE)
Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)
CureHHT
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Debra of America
Dysautonomia International
ECAN Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Epilepsy Foundation
Fibrous Dysplasia Foundation
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne
George Mason University
Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Global Health Technologies Coalition
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
Hepatitis B Foundation
HIV Medicine Association
Hydrocephalus Association
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Myeloma Foundation
International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation
KidneyCAN
Kidney Cancer Association
Littlest Tumor Foundation

Living Beyond Breast Cancer
LUNGeivity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America
Malaria No More
Melanoma Research Foundation
Men's Health Network
Miami Project to Cure Paralysis
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 ("The Prostate Cancer Alliance")
National Autism Association
National Brain Tumor Society
National Fragile X Foundation
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Neurofibromatosis Midwest
Neurofibromatosis Network
Neurofibromatosis Northeast
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
PKD Foundation
The Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Prostate Health Education Network, Inc.
Research!America
SHEPHERD Foundation
Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation
Society for Neuroscience
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Stony Brook University
Susan G. Komen
Texas NF Foundation
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
UCLA
University of Central Florida
University of Iowa
Us TOO Prostate Cancer Education & Support
Veterans for Common Sense
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
Wayne State University
Weill Cornell Medicine
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer