

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  
LUNgevity 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