

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