October 6, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  The Honorable Charles Schumer
Speaker of the House  Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader  Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20510

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

We, the undersigned organizations urge you to work toward the enactment of the fiscal year 2022 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 2022.

Our organizations appreciate recent actions by Congress to pass a short-term continuing resolution to extend federal agencies and programs through December 3, 2021. However, we are particularly concerned about the possibility of Congress enacting a year-long continuing resolution in lieu of completing the fiscal year 2022 Defense Appropriations Act. Under a year-long continuing resolution the CDMRP would receive no funding in fiscal year 2022. 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 2022 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 2022 grant solicitation process until they receive a fully-enacted fiscal year 2022 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 2022 appropriations bill will create unnecessary disruption with internal processes at DoD.
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 2022 grants. Further, failure to enact a fully-funded fiscal year 2022 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 2022 Defense Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,

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, Oral, and Craniofacial Research  
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association  
American Brain Tumor Association  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
American Urological Association  
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation  
APS Foundation of America, Inc  
Arthritis Foundation  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
KidneyCAN
Kidney Cancer Association
The LAM Foundation
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Living Beyond Breast Cancer
LUNGevity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America
Lupus Research Alliance
Malecare Cancer Support
Melanoma Research Foundation
Men’s Health Network
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
Miami Project to Cure Paralysis
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
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 MS Society
Neurofibromatosis Midwest
Neurofibromatosis Network
Neurofibromatosis Northeast
North American Spinal Cord Injury Consortium
Northeastern University
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
PKD Foundation
Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC)
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation
Quinism Foundation
Scleroderma Foundation
Sgt. Sullivan Circle
SHEPHERD Foundation
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
Society for Neuroscience
Solve M.E.
St. Baldrick's Foundation
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Susan G. Komen
Texas NF Foundation
TSC Alliance
University of Iowa
Vasculitis Foundation
Veterans for Common Sense
VHL Alliance
Vietnam Veterans of America
Weill Cornell Medicine
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer

cc: House and Senate Committee on Appropriations