

October 27, 2023

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to work toward the enactment of the fiscal year 2024 Defense Appropriations Act, to ensure full funding levels for the Defense Health Research Programs, including the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). We collectively represent millions of American veterans, military retirees, military families, and civilians who benefit from the ongoing research funded by the CDMRP.

Our organizations appreciate recent actions by Congress to pass a short-term continuing resolution to extend federal agencies and programs through November 17, 2023. However, we are particularly concerned about the possibility of Congress enacting additional short-term continuing resolutions that would delay final consideration of the appropriations bills until next year. Even worse, a period of government shutdown would completely halt all operations of CDMRP and be highly disruptive to plans for soliciting, reviewing and evaluating grant applications and administering existing awards.

Failure to enact the Defense Appropriations Act this year will have major negative health implications for the millions of Americans – especially veterans, military service members and their families – who live with infection-associated, chronic and debilitating disorders. Further delay will impede important new discoveries and translation of medical innovation into new treatments and cures for many disorders.

Every year, CDMRP engages in a rigorous process of vision setting, solicitation of proposals, and a two-step peer and programmatic review of applications submitted for consideration. 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 2024 Defense Appropriations Act 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 2024 grants.

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Further, failure to enact a fully-funded fiscal year 2024 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 programs. 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 legislation 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 2024 Defense Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,

ALS Association  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI)  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Brain Tumor Association  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Lung Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
American Society of Hematology  
American Urological Association  
Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation  
APS Foundation of America, Inc  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Org (ADAO)  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Beyond Celiac  
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network

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Blue Faery: The Adrienne Wilson Liver Cancer Association  
Brown University  
Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis  
Cancer ABCs  
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine  
Celiac Disease Foundation  
Children's Tumor Foundation  
Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)  
Connect Melanoma  
COVID-19 Longhailer Advocacy Project  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
CTNNB1 Connect & Cure  
CURE Epilepsy  
CureSHANK  
Danny Did Epilepsy Foundation  
Deadliest Cancers Coalition  
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer  
DLG4 Research Fund  
Duke Health  
Duke University  
Dup15q Alliance  
dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa research association of America (debra of America)  
ECAN Esophageal Cancer Action Network  
Epilepsies Action Network (EAN)  
Epilepsy Alliance America  
Epilepsy Foundation  
FAM177A1 Research Fund  
FD/MAS Alliance  
Fibroid Foundation  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered  
Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy  
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne  
GO2 for Lung Cancer  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
HIV Medicine Association  
Hydrocephalus Association  
Immune Deficiency Foundation  
Indiana University  
Infectious Diseases Society

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International Myeloma Foundation  
International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation  
Johns Hopkins University  
Kidney Cancer Association  
KidneyCAN  
Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome (LGS) Foundation  
Littlest Tumor Foundation  
Living Beyond Breast Cancer  
LUNGeivity Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Lupus Foundation of America  
Lupus Research Alliance  
Malecare Cancer Support  
Melanoma Research Foundation  
Mesothelioma Applied 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 Autism Association  
National Brain Tumor Society  
National Fragile X Foundation  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Pancreas Foundation  
National Scleroderma Foundation  
Neurofibromatosis Midwest  
Neurofibromatosis Network  
Neurofibromatosis Northeast  
North American Spinal Cord Injury Consortium (NASCI)  
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)  
Pandemic Patients  
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy  
Penn State University  
Project 8P Foundation  
Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC)  
Prostate Cancer Foundation  
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
Rare Epilepsy Network (REN)  
Research!America  
Sergeant Sullivan Circle

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SHEPHERD Foundation  
Sjogren's Foundation  
Solve M.E.  
St. Baldrick's Foundation  
Susan G. Komen  
Syngap Research Fund  
SYNGAP1 Foundation  
Texas NF Foundation  
The LAM Foundation  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
The Quinism Foundation  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
TSC Alliance  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
University of North Carolina System  
University of Rochester  
Vasculitis Foundation  
Veterans for Common Sense  
VHL Alliance  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
ZERO Prostate Cancer

cc: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations