

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Charlie Dent  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies  
HVC-227, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dent and Ranking Member Bishop:

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's veterans. Congress has long understood the relationship between robust research into the health care needs of our veterans and improved outcomes in treatment and care. For this reason, we respectfully request that the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2016 fully fund the President's budget request of \$622 million for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation.

As part of the largest integrated health care system in the United States, the VA is in prime position to study the causes and most effective treatments of the conditions that most commonly afflict our servicemembers and veterans. Currently, VA researchers are studying treatments for some of the most devastating mental and physical health issues affecting veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), traumatic amputation, sensory dysfunction and loss, polytrauma, and suicide. The VA is assessing the impact of military sexual trauma (MST) on both men and women veterans, researching substance-use disorders, and measuring the impact of the ongoing Program of Comprehensive Assistance for VA Family Caregivers on the health of both veterans and their caregivers.

VA's research also focuses on continuing care across a veteran's entire life span, studying causes and treatments of various cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), chronic pain, and Gulf War illnesses. The VA also recognizes the growing percentage of women that make up our armed forces and veteran population and is developing research on women's health during and after deployment as well as studying potential gender disparities in VA care.

Veterans also have the option of participating in VA's Million Veteran Program (MVP), funded by the VA research appropriation, which aims to better understand the relationship between genes, environment, and health. With MVP being the largest genetic cohort in North America, there is enormous potential to make significant progress on countless mental and physical health conditions afflicting veterans and their families.

The President's VA Medical and Prosthetic Research request, a \$33 million increase over FY 2015 enacted levels, includes a \$10.2 million proposal for a research initiative entitled "Learning Health Care System." This initiative would further evidence-based decisionmaking, improving the effectiveness and quality of care.

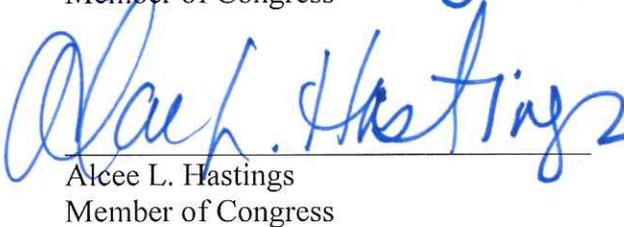
Let's work together to foster a health care system for our nation's veterans that is as innovative and effective as they are. We urge you to fully fund the President's Budget request of \$622 million for Medical and Prosthetic Research.

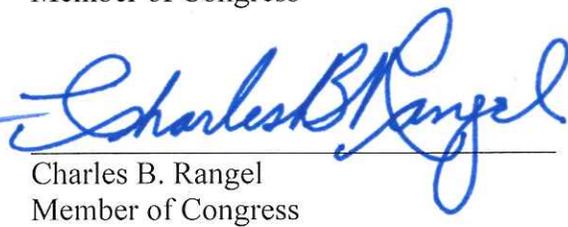
Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on behalf of our veterans.

Sincerely,

  
Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress

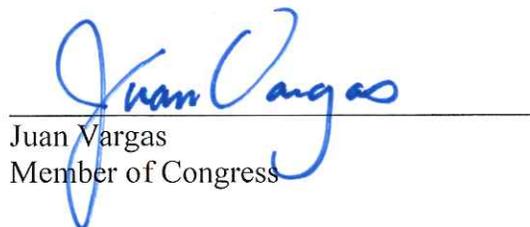
  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

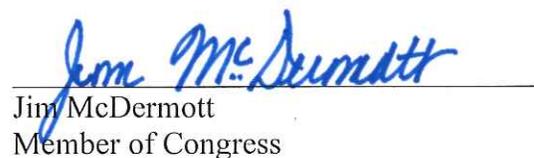
  
Alcee L. Hastings  
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Charles B. Rangel  
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Ted Deutch  
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Judy Chu  
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Juan Vargas  
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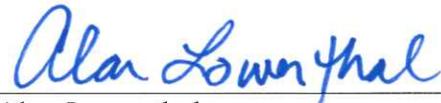
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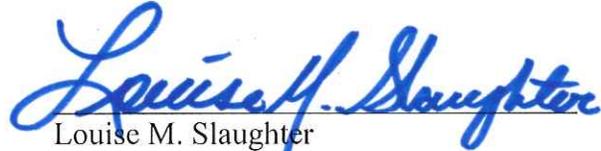
Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



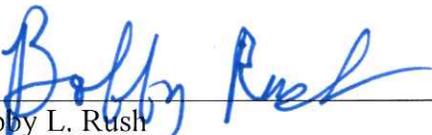
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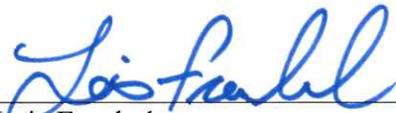
Louise M. Slaughter  
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Bobby L. Rush  
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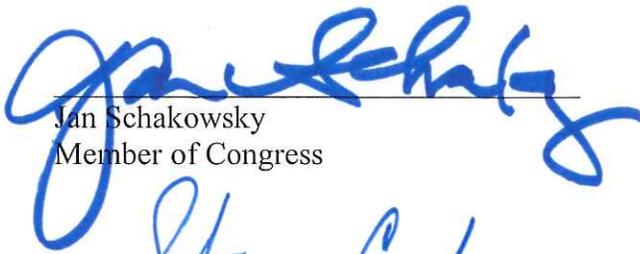
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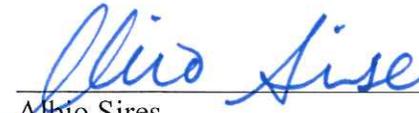
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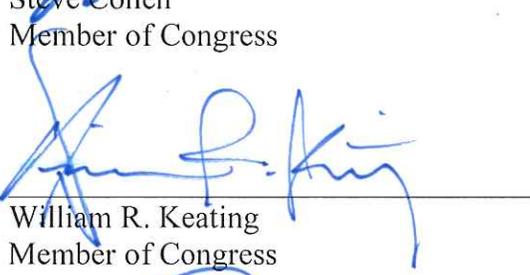
Filemon Vela  
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Steve Cohen  
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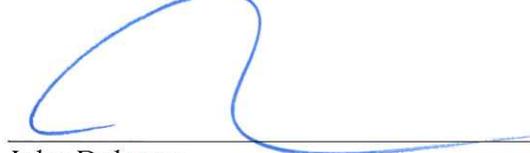
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



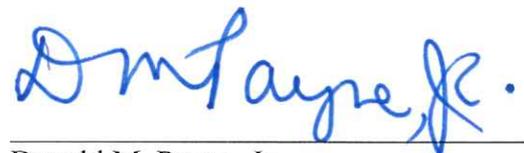
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



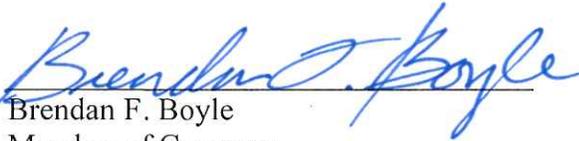
Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



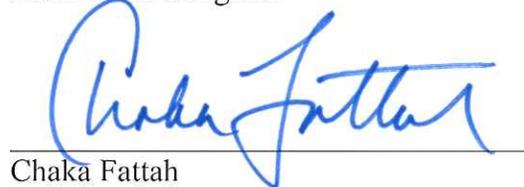
John Delaney  
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Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress

  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

  
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

  
Susan Davis  
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Jerry McNerney  
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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress