

May 24, 2016

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senator
Chair
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senator
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed,

The undersigned organizations and institutions write in opposition to Sections 756 and 898 of S. 2943, the fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which would prohibit funding for medical research at the Department of Defense (DoD) unless such research meets certain narrowly defined criteria related to military relevance. We urge you to support amendments that we expect to be offered during Senate floor consideration that would strike this language from the bill.

We oppose Section 756 because it is unnecessary and, if enacted, could jeopardize funding for research activities that have broader relevance to the U.S. military, including the health and well-being of military families and veterans, and the efficiency of the military health care system. We oppose Section 898 because it would place unnecessary and burdensome acquisition compliance and auditing requirements on programs that are already serving the taxpayer well.

The medical research programs at DoD directly impact the health and lives of the U.S. military, including combat veterans and their families. They include important medical research programs related to several forms of cancer and other disorders. Grants awarded through these programs have led to breakthroughs on nerve regeneration and traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – key developments favorably impacting our newest wounded warriors. Other programs provide groundbreaking research on psychological health, Gulf War Illness, spinal cord injury, and hearing and vision loss (which comprise a significant portion of current battlefield injuries). Many of these diseases occur at greater rates in those who have served in the military.

Defense health research grants undergo rigorous merit review from both scientific and consumer review panels, and are awarded competitively based in large part on their innovative qualities as well as scientific merit and relevance to the U.S. military.

During floor consideration of S. 2943, we urge the Senate to support amendments to strike this language from the bill and also support continued investments in the medical research programs at DoD.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Action to Cure Kidney Cancer
Alliance for Lupus Research/Lupus Research Institute
ALS Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association of Clinical Urologists
American Brain Tumor Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Diabetes Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Lung Association
American Psychological Association
American Thoracic Society
American Urological Association
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation
Arthritis Foundation
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Autism Speaks
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Cancer Support Community
Caring Together New York
Children's Tumor Foundation
Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)
Colon Cancer Alliance
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
CureHHT
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Duke University
Duke University School of Medicine
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
Endocrine Society
Esophageal Cancer Action Network, Inc.
Fight Colorectal Cancer
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Foundation for Women's Cancer
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne
GBS|CIDP Foundation International
Hepatitis Foundation International
Indiana University

International Foundation for Functional GI Disorders
International Myeloma Foundation
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Johns Hopkins University
Kidney Cancer Association
LAM Foundation
Lineberger Clinic Cancer Center at the University of North Carolina
Littlest Tumor Foundation
Living Beyond Breast Cancer
Lung Cancer Alliance
Lymphangiomatosis & Gorham's Disease Alliance
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Malecare Cancer Support
Melanoma Research Foundation
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
Michigan State University
Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Association of Nurse Practitioners In Women's Health
National Autism Association
National Gulf War Resource Center
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
NephCure Kidney International
Neurofibromatosis Arizona
Neurofibromatosis Central Plains
Neurofibromatosis Michigan
Neurofibromatosis (NF) Midwest
Neurofibromatosis Network
Neurofibromatosis Northeast
Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD)
Penn State University
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Prostate Health Education Network
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Research!America
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
State University of New York

Susan G. Komen
Texas Neurofibromatosis Foundation
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
University of California System
University of Central Florida
University of Kansas
University of Kansas Medical Center
University of Pittsburgh
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
US Hereditary Angioedema Association
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
Vanderbilt University
Veterans for Common Sense
Veterans Health Council
Vietnam Veterans of America
Washington State Neurofibromatosis Families
Weill Cornell Medicine
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer

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