

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2024

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz:

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of our nation's veterans by providing an increase to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act. 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 a funding level of \$1.05 billion for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program within the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025.

The VA Office of Research and Development plays a key role in advancing the health and care of veterans and is uniquely positioned to continue to lead a national transformation of American health care. As part of the largest integrated health care system in the United States, VA Research and Development has the access needed to study the causes and most effective treatments of conditions commonly afflicting our servicemembers and veterans.

VA research seeks to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our nation's veterans and endeavors to extend their life expectancy. Achieving a remarkable milestone, in November 2023, the VA enrolled its one millionth veteran into the precision medicine-focused Million Veteran Program (MVP), which looks at how genes, lifestyle, military experiences, and exposures affect health and wellness in veterans. Additionally, in FY 2023, VA research projects included studies on the following: addressing PTSD and addiction in combat veterans; improving lung cancer screening access to 99 VA medical centers across the nation; expanding sequencing research to identify high consequence infectious diseases that impact the veteran populations; and renewing research on the interaction of stress and mild traumatic brain injuries.

VA Research and Development also funded clinical trials for experimental treatments for bone regeneration and spinal cord injuries as well as precision medicine for several cancer types. Prosthetic research studies included those that sought to improve lower limbs, foot, and ankle prosthetics and to better understand the unique challenges faced by women using prosthetics. These novel treatments and diagnostics do not just benefit our country's veterans, but they benefit all Americans who suffer from complex disease processes.

The President's Budget Request for VA research this year is \$868 million, a decrease of \$75 million compared to FY 2024 appropriations and \$179 million below our request. The President's requested decrease does not account for biomedical research and development price

inflation and would limit research potential at the same time our country—and veterans in particular—is struggling with burgeoning rates of mental health disease. Furthermore, additional funding for the VA research program is critical to support recruitment and retention of researchers as the VA increases research efforts related to toxic exposures and mental health following new authorities enacted in the 117th Congress. Increasing the medical and prosthetics research budget by \$107 million above the FY 2024 enacted level would ensure that the VA can maintain cutting-edge research programs that benefit not just America’s veterans, but all people who suffer from complex diseases.

It is imperative that Congress demonstrates a clear commitment to VA research and encourages a health care system for our nation’s veterans that is as innovative and effective as they are. We urge you to provide a meaningful investment of \$1.05 billion for the VA’s Medical and Prosthetic Research Program for the coming fiscal year.

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

Sincerely,



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
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Sablan
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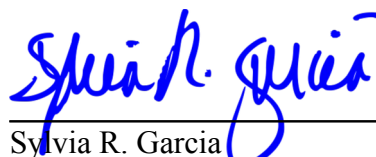
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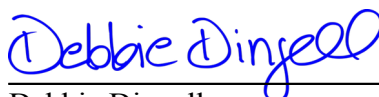
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Steve Cohen
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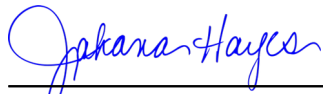
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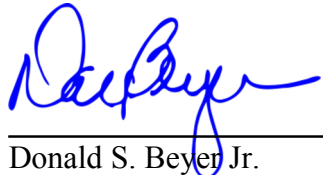
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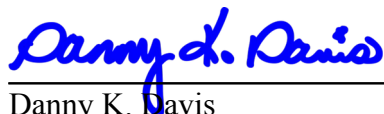
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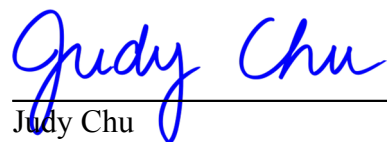
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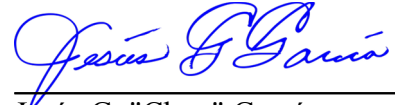
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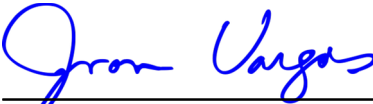
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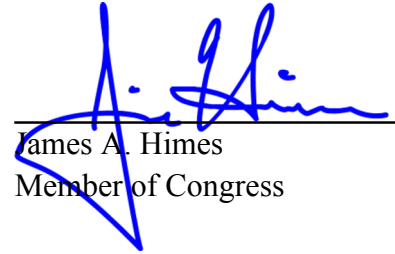
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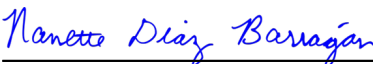
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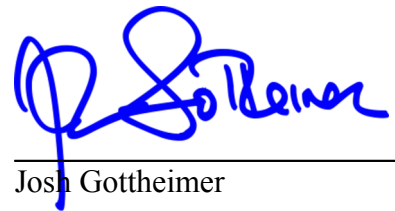
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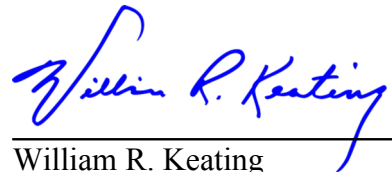
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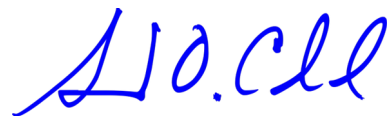
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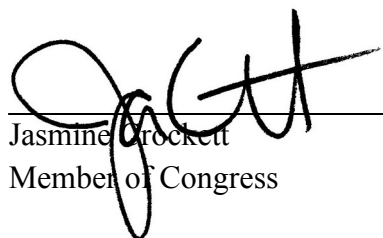
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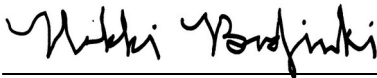
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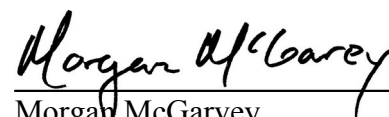
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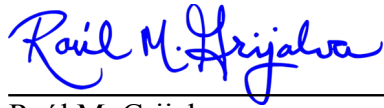
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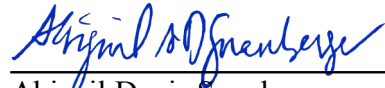
Richard E. Neal
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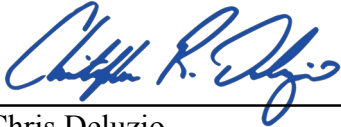
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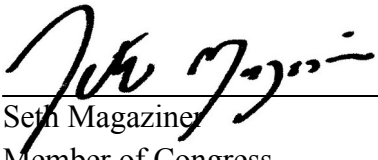
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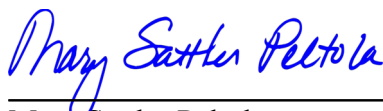
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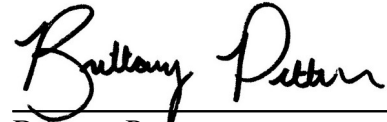
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