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,

[Signatures]

Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

James A. Himes  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Aumua Amata Coleman
Radewagen
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress

Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Summer Lee
Member of Congress

Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress