



**FOVA EXECUTIVE
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December 2, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), we write to urge swift enactment of fiscal year (FY) 2020 spending bills to ensure the best medical research and clinical care for our veterans continues without delay. FOVA was founded over 30 years ago to ensure that America's veterans receive high-quality health care supported by veteran-centric research. Today, FOVA is a diverse coalition representing nearly 90 national academic, medical, and scientific societies; health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations.

The uncertainty and delayed funding created by continuing resolutions (CRs) jeopardizes VA's ability to conduct medical research and translate findings into high-quality and timely health care services for veterans. Continuing funding at FY 2019 levels impedes VA research in all priority areas, including veteran suicide prevention, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other acute and chronic health conditions with increased incidences in the veteran population.

FOVA is appreciative of the steady, predictable funding increases Congress has provided for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program in recent years, allowing VA to expand and excel in developing innovative treatments and diagnostics and to use cutting edge technology to care for veterans. We are also grateful for the House-passed funding level of \$840 million for the VA research program for FY 2020, a funding level similar to the request of Senators Durbin, Duckworth, and colleagues, and we hope the final spending bill will reflect this continued commitment to the VA research program.

With a second CR underway, we urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to finalize and implement FY 2020 spending bills so veteran-centric research can continue without interruption. We look forward to working with you towards this goal.

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee

cc:

The Honorable John Boozman, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable John Carter, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies