

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2006

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
H-309 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Murtha:

As the conferees begin to work on the FY 07 Defense Appropriations conference, we respectfully seek your support for retaining the FY 06 funding level of \$5 million for Gulf War Veterans Illnesses research.

The Congressionally chartered Veterans' Administration Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses found in September 2004 that fourteen years after the 1990-1991 Gulf War, between 26 and 32 percent of those who served in that war continue to suffer from serious and persistent health problems—typically multiple symptoms that include severe headaches, memory problems, muscle and joint pain, severe gastrointestinal problems, respiratory problems, skin disorders and other problems. They also determined that the existence of these serious and often debilitating problems could not be scientifically explained by stress or psychiatric illness.

We are only now starting to see the long-term effects. For example, ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, occurs in Persian Gulf veterans with twice the frequency of peer veterans that were not deployed. Yet a federal research program to better understand these issues that was once \$45 million strong has been virtually eliminated. The FY 07 budget dedicates no funding to either the Department of Defense or the Department of Health and Human Services for Gulf War Illnesses research. The funding we are requesting is consistent with the VA Research Committee recommendations.

The request for funding is supported by several groups including the American Legion, Veterans for America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the National Gulf War Resource Center.

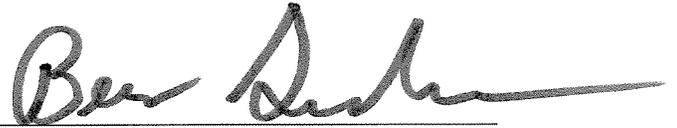
Finally, as was the case last year, research guidance was developed in consultation with top members of the VA Research Committee. We therefore request that the guidance be included in the conference report. The guidance text is attached for your reference. We expect this research to supplement the other promising research performed within the Department of Defense.

Thank you for consideration of our requests.

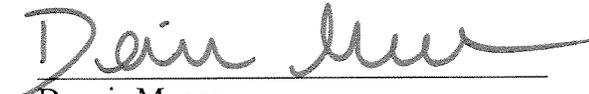
Sincerely,



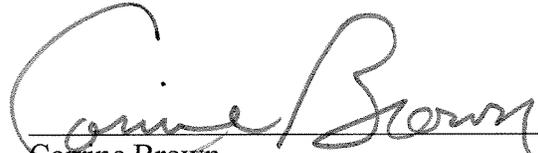
Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



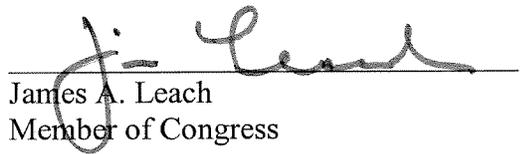
Bernard Sanders
Member of Congress



Dennis Moore
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



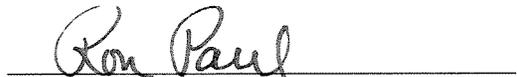
James A. Leach
Member of Congress



Steven C. LaTourette
Member of Congress



Christopher Shays
Member of Congress



Ron Paul
Member of Congress



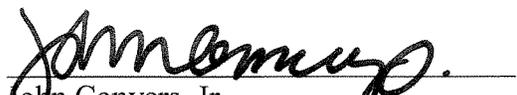
Rick Renzi
Member of Congress



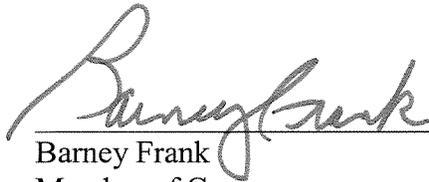
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



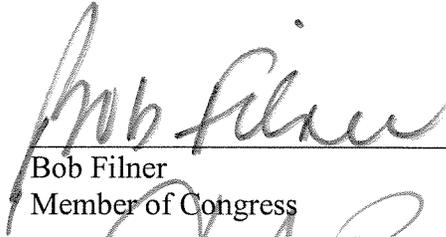
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



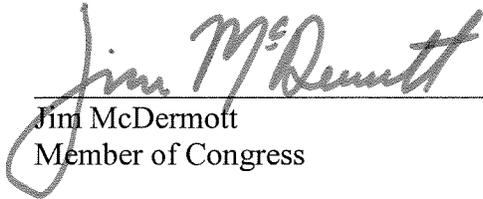
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



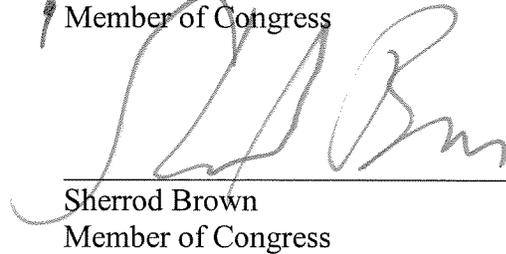
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Bob Filner
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



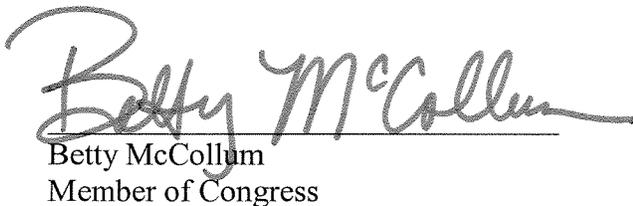
Sherrod Brown
Member of Congress



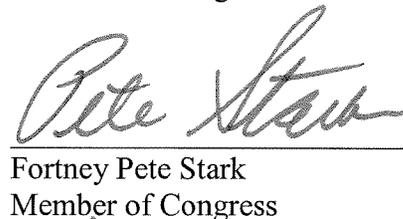
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



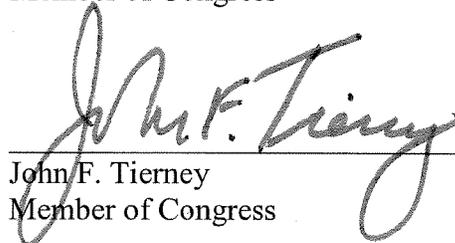
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress



John W. Olver
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



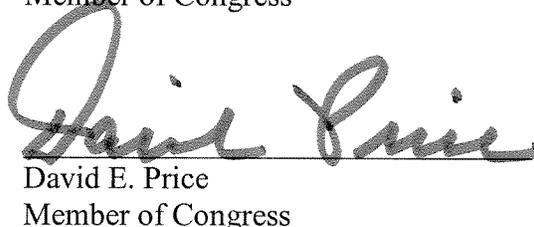
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress

**Guidance for Gulf War Veterans Illnesses research in the
FY07 Defense Appropriations bill:**

“It is intended that the appropriation for research on chronic illnesses affecting veterans of the 1991 Gulf War be used for a coherent research program focusing on 1) identification of mechanisms underlying Gulf War illnesses, 2) chronic effects of neurotoxic substances to which veterans were exposed during deployment; 3) studies that expand on earlier research identifying neurological and immunological abnormalities in ill Gulf War veterans; and 4) identification of promising treatments. The primary objective of the research program will be to elucidate pathophysiological mechanisms underlying Gulf War illnesses, which may subsequently be targeted to developing treatments for these conditions. A further objective will be to identify and evaluate treatments which currently exist and which hold promise for treating these illnesses.

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command shall, in consultation with experienced research scientists in relevant fields who are recommended by the Chairman of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, establish a list of research questions to address the above topics, and design a program of specific research studies to answer these questions, each identified study to be conducted by the most qualified researcher, which may include consulted scientists. This program shall take into account and coordinate with other Gulf War illnesses research programs funded by the federal government, and shall, together with these programs constitute a coherent research plan to address these focused topics.

As part of this process, there shall be a public solicitation of research proposals (which may include concept exploration and pilot projects) on these questions and at least fifty percent of the program (measured by amount funded) shall be made up of proposals selected from this solicitation, as modified if necessary to increase the value of the proposed research to the overall program. At least twenty percent of the program (measured by amount funded) shall address the objective of identifying and evaluating promising existing treatments, such as observation and pilot studies. The program shall be submitted for determination of scientific merit through independent peer review.”