

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405, Main Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert,

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, and other Members of Congress, respectfully request increased funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 to identify and care for wounded warriors with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health issues and to improve research in these critical areas.

As you well know, TBI continues to be the signature injury among our nation's service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 400,000 troops have been diagnosed with mild TBI since 2000. This number continues to increase as identification and detection methods become more accurate. TBI is a complex condition that requires comprehensive, specialized care. In recent years, the DOD has made significant strides in improving both in-theater and post-incident assessment and diagnosis, but still more needs to be done in evaluating troops' ability to return to duty. Intensive and innovative rehabilitation care is also needed for those sustaining severe TBIs and left with varying levels of disorders of consciousness.

Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Programs – Psychological Health/Traumatic Brain Injury

The Psychological Health and TBI Research Program, through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, was created by Congress in Fiscal Year 2007 in response to the injuries sustained by our servicemen and women in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the funding that this program provides, researchers are working in a collaborative manner to prevent, mitigate, and treat the effects of TBI and other psychological health conditions. While we have made great strides, there is still much that we do not know about TBIs acquired through military service, particularly the impact and mechanics of blast injury. We commend the committee's decision to fully fund the Psychological Health and TBI Research Program at \$165 million, level with FY20 enacted funding, and urge them to continue to fully fund this program in FY2021.

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC):

Since 1992, the DVBIC has coordinated care for our service members from the battlefield to the community and has engaged in a wide range of TBI research to improve state of the art medical

treatment and rehabilitation. Increased funding would allow the work of DVBIC to continue focusing on enhanced screening techniques for better evaluation, treatment, follow-up, and staying at the forefront of developing technology for field detection of TBI. DVBIC will also continue its multi-center clinical trials to improve medication and rehabilitation and maintain the 15-year longitudinal study as mandated by the NDAA.

National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE):

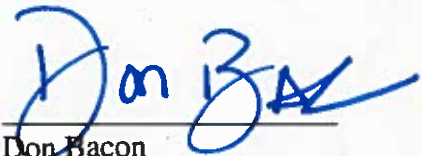
NICoE is responsible for treating military personnel diagnosed with TBI and/or PH for which other programs have not proven successful. We must address the incidence of suicide and the myriad of psychological problems our troops are experiencing as a result of their service on the battlefield. It is imperative that our troops receive every possible opportunity to receive the care and rehabilitation they need and deserve to either return to theater or to reenter the civilian workforce. We urge robust funding for NICoE in order to maintain the health of our servicemembers.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests to improve medical care and bolster vital research within the Department of Defense. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



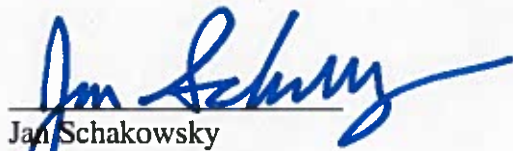
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



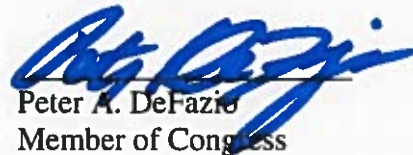
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



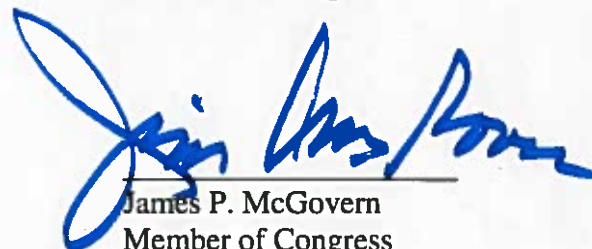
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



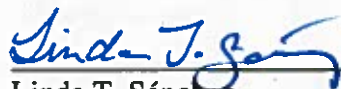
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



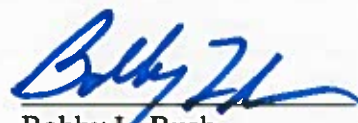
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



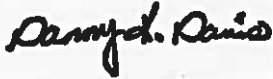
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



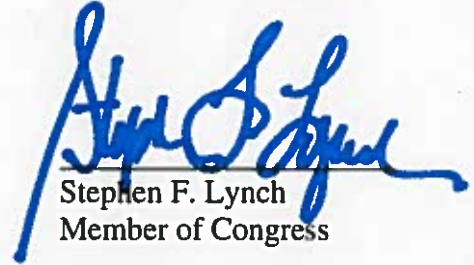
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



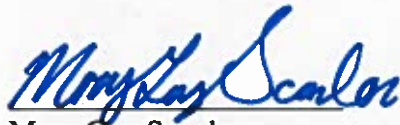
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress




Scott Peters
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



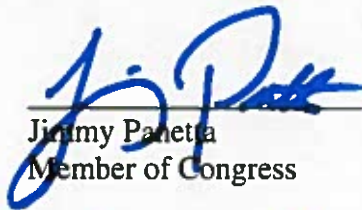
Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



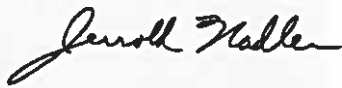
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

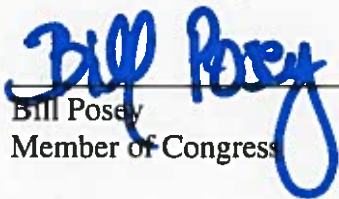


Andy Levin
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



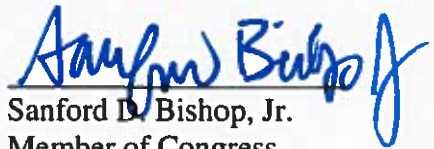
Bill Posey
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James P. McGovern
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Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



TJ Cox
Member of Congress



Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Gaetz". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Matt" and last name "Gaetz" clearly legible.

Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress