



# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

April 13, 2018

Chairman Richard Shelby  
Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Richard Durbin  
Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin:

We are writing to thank you for your continued strong support of the ALS Research Program (ALSRP) within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) at the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). We respectfully request \$10 million for the ALSRP in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

This program is critical to helping advance the search for a treatment for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a fatal neurodegenerative disease that destroys a person's ability to control muscle movement. Individuals with ALS may stop walking, speaking, eating, moving, or even breathing. The average life expectancy for a person with ALS is just two to five years after diagnosis. To date, there is no effective treatment or identified cause of the disease.

According to numerous studies, including those funded by the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), military veterans are approximately twice as likely to die from ALS as those who have not served in the military. Air Force veterans in the Gulf War were up to 2.7 times as likely to develop ALS as those not deployed. We believe that it is important for DOD to identify and research all diseases that may be related to service in the U.S. military, including ALS.

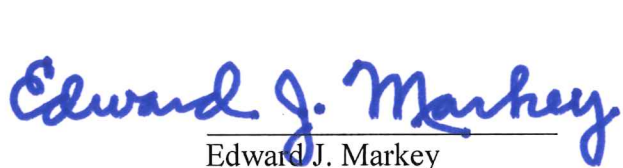
The ALSRP connects basic science to new treatments for ALS by funding innovative projects that fill the gaps in NIH funded research. The ALSRP is a model of collaboration, as researchers from the DOD, VA, NIH and private sector partner together to exchange research and establish strategic direction for the government's fight against ALS. The program also funds research in the private sector on a peer-reviewed, competitive grant basis. To date, the ALSRP has generated four potential treatments for ALS and additional research is ongoing.

Congress has recognized the critical role the ALSRP plays in advancing the search for a treatment by appropriating funding for the program since FY2007, including \$10 million in FY2018. We respectfully request level funding for ALSRP at \$10 million in the FY 2019 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. By continuing funding for the ALSRP, the DOD will be able to move us closer to finding a treatment for this horrific disease.

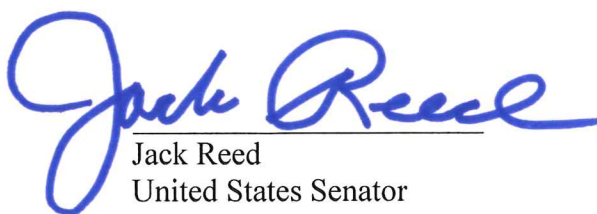
Sincerely,

Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

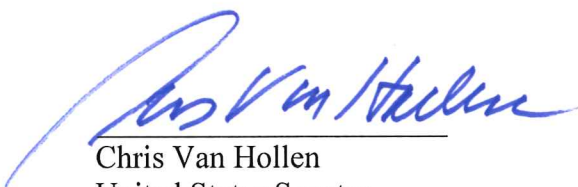
Bill Cassidy M.D.  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



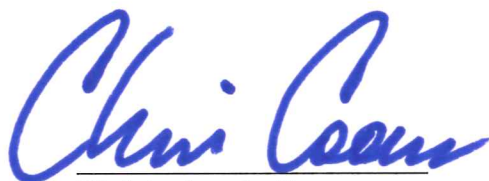
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



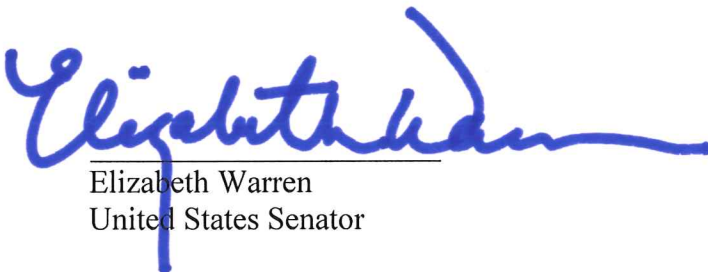
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



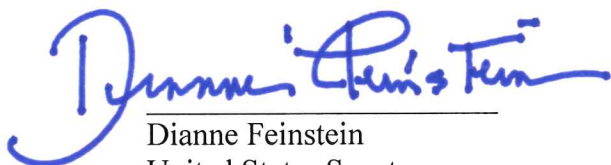
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator