Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Calvert:

On behalf of the nearly one million Americans living with multiple sclerosis (MS)[1], thank you for your past support for MS research funded through the Multiple Sclerosis Research Program (MSRP) at the Department of Defense. Congressional investment in the MSRP is expediting the development of new and innovative solutions for people with MS and ultimately targeting a cure.

MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis, but the progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, during the prime of an individual's life, with at least two to three times more women being diagnosed with the disease than men. There currently is no cure, but investment in research will drive solutions that will bring us closer to a world free of MS.

Nearly 70,000 American veterans live with MS.[2] In fact, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers MS a presumptive condition – meaning that it is presumed that an individual's MS is caused by military service if it is diagnosed within seven years from an individual's date of discharge. MS has a higher incidence in military service members than in the general population and over the past decade, over 2,400 active-duty service members, reserve and National Guard Service members received a new diagnosis of MS within the Military Health service[34]. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provide care to 30%-40% of American veterans and of those veterans who do receive care at the VHA, over half

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[1] Mitchell T. Wallin, William J. Culpepper, Jonathan D. Campbell, Lorene M. Nelson, Annette Langer-Gould, Ruth Ann Marrie, Gary R. Cutter, Wendy E. Kaye, Laurie Wagner, Helen Tremlett, Stephen L. Buka, Piyameth Dilokthornsakul, Barbara Topol, Lie H. Chen, Nicholas G. LaRocca. The prevalence of MS in the United States. Neurology Feb 2019, 10.1212/WNL.0000000000007035; DOI: 10.1212/WNL.0000000000007035

[2] Wallin, M. T., Culpepper, W. J., Campbell, J. D., Nelson, L. M., Langer-Gould, A., Marrie, R. A., Cutter, G. R., Kaye, W. E., Wagner, L., Tremlett, H., Buka, S. L., Dilokthornsakul, P., Topol, B., Chen, L. H., & LaRocca, N. G. (2019). The prevalence of MS in the United States. *Neurology*, *92*(10), e1029–e1040. https://doi.org/10.1212/wnl.0000000000007035

[3] Wallin, M. T., Culpepper, W. J., Campbell, J. D., Nelson, L. M., Langer-Gould, A., Marrie, R. A., Cutter, G. R., Kaye, W. E., Wagner, L., Tremlett, H., Buka, S. L., Dilokthornsakul, P., Topol, B., Chen, L. H., & LaRocca, N. G. (2019). The prevalence of MS in the United States. *Neurology*, *92*(10), e1029–e1040. https://doi.org/10.1212/wnl.0000000000007035

[4] Eussing EC, et al. Estimated incidence of multiple sclerosis among United States Armed Forces personnel using the Defense Medical Surveillance System. Mil Med. 2012 May;177(5):594-600.

have a service-connected disability for MS. An MS diagnosis may take several years, and for active-duty service members this diagnosis often results in a medical military discharge.

The high-risk, high reward research funded by the MSRP will help answer basic biological questions about MS can significantly improve readiness for our armed service personnel as well as improve outcomes and care for all of those living with MS. This research will transform our understanding of MS and propel innovative research into potential treatments and identify pathways to a cure.

Novel solutions and a cure for MS will improve the readiness of our active-duty personnel and help improve treatment and outcomes of veterans and the American public living with MS**. To meet these goals, we ask that you provide $22 million for the MSRP in the FY2023 Defense Appropriations bill.** By continuing to invest in MS research, we can get even closer to finding life-altering solutions for so many.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
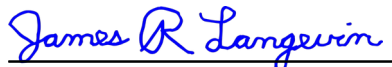
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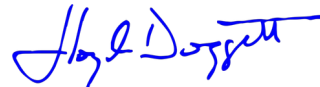
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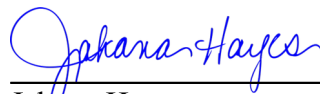
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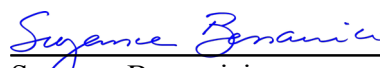
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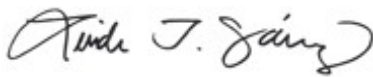
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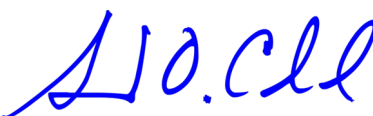
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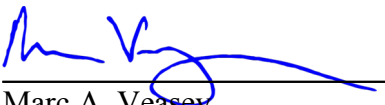
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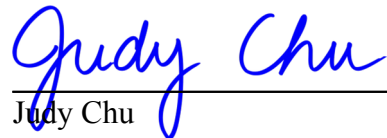
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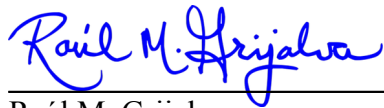
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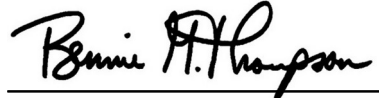
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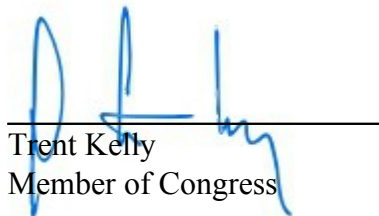
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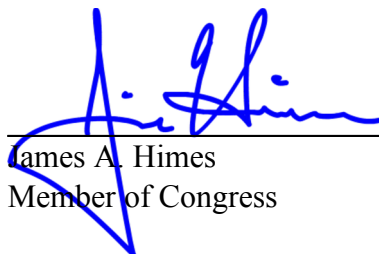
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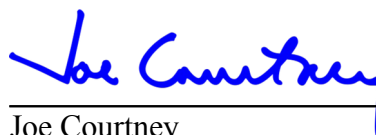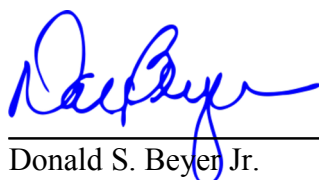Member of Congress

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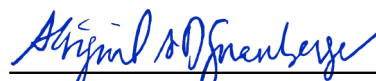Joe Courtney
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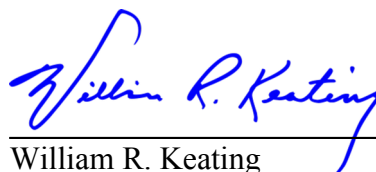Member of Congress

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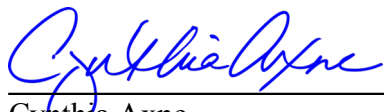Member of Congress

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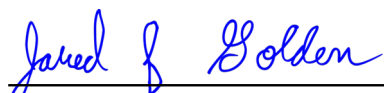Member of Congress

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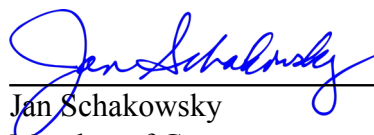Member of Congress

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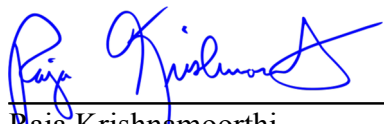Member of Congress

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