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\(^3\). 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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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,

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
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Chris Pappas  
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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress
Conor Lamb  
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
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Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
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Dwight Evans
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Raúl M. Grijalva
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Mike Thompson
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Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
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Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Trent Kelly
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Ami Bera, M.D.
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James A. Himes
Member of Congress
Michael Guest  
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
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Joe Courtney  
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross  
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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
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SETH MOULTON  
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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress
Cynthia Axne  
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress

Jared Golden  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress