

November 2, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
228 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
228 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

We, the undersigned organizations write today to express our objections to amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) bill added on the Senate floor that would harm the Peer Reviewed Orthopaedic Research Program (PRORP), a vital defense health research program specifically initiated to help U.S. soldiers who suffer from extremity war injuries.

Eighty-two percent of injuries from the Global War on Terror involve the extremities – often severe and multiple injuries to the arms and legs. Most of these wounds are caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and high-velocity gunshot wounds. Amputation following these kinds of battlefield injuries occurs at twice the rate of past wars.

A U.S. Army analysis of soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan shows that extremity injuries account for the greatest proportion of medical resource utilization and causes the greatest number of disabled soldiers. In fact, soldiers with extremity injuries had the longest average inpatient stays and accounted for 65 percent of total inpatient resource utilization. In addition, it is projected that they will account for 69 percent of warriors who are deemed medically unfit to return to duty. Exclusive of any short or long-term medical costs, the projected disability cost for extremity injuries sustained in these conflicts to date is approximately \$1.2 billion.

The goal of PRORP is to help military surgeons address the leading burden of injury and loss of fitness for military duty by finding new limb-sparing techniques to save injured extremities, avoid amputations, and preserve and restore the function of injured extremities. PRORP aims to provide all warriors affected by orthopaedic injuries the opportunity for optimal recovery and restoration of function.

We hate to think of the important ground our researchers and scientists will lose if defense health funding for this vital research program goes away. There is no comparable source for orthopaedic research funding in this field. We ask you to reject the Senate provisions in the NDAA conference that will harm defense health programs including the Peer Reviewed Orthopaedic Research Program.

Sincerely,

American Association for Hand Surgery
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons
American Spinal Injury Association
Arthroscopy Association of North America

J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society
Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
National Association of Spine Specialists
Orthopaedic Research Society
Orthopaedic Trauma Association
Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society
Scoliosis Research Society
The Hip Society