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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC POLICY

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

March 22, 2010

Norman D. Dicks
Chair
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Room H-149, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Young:

We thank you for your steady support of the Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Research Program (GWVIRP) within Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). The \$8 million awarded to the program for fiscal year 2010 will ensure the perpetuation of this important work. As the Subcommittee begins to work on the fiscal year 2011 Appropriations bill for the Subcommittee on Defense, we respectfully seek your support for \$25 million, a pragmatic incremental increase toward the \$40 million recommended by the Congressionally-mandated Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses at the Department of Veterans Affairs (RAC).

In its landmark 454-page report delivered in November 2008, the RAC reported that "Gulf War illness is real, that it is the result of neurotoxic exposures during Gulf War deployment, and that few veterans have recovered or substantially improved with time." For 175,000 Gulf War veterans – one in four of those who served – the illnesses mean "multiple concurrent symptoms typically includ(ing) persistent memory and concentration problems, chronic headaches, widespread pain, gastrointestinal problems, and other chronic abnormalities." The research also shows that Gulf War veterans suffer from ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, at double the rate of their non-deployed peers. Other chronic diseases like Multiple Sclerosis are suspected to occur at elevated rates in Gulf War veterans as well.

The Research Advisory Committee report praised the Gulf War illness research program which Congress, with your Subcommittee's support, has established within the DoD CDMRP, for its "results-oriented direction and management," "a clear departure from previous federal Gulf War research programs." The report concluded: "A renewed federal research commitment is needed to identify treatments . . . to achieve the critical objectives of improving the health of Gulf War veterans and preventing similar problems in future deployments."

General Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, last month announced that the VA intends to revisit the rejected claims of Gulf War veterans who have attempted to access treatment for the illnesses linked to their service. However there is still no effective treatment for these veterans, which is why the GWVIRP is so important.

Funding will be used for pilot studies of promising treatments, for clinical trials of treatments shown effective in earlier pilot studies, and for a research center to identify other promising candidates. As the Subcommittee begins work on the fiscal year 2011 Appropriations bill for the Department of Defense, we respectfully seek your support for this \$25 million.

Thank you for consideration of our request.

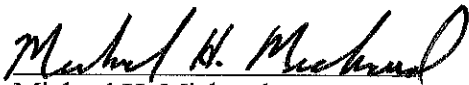
Sincerely,



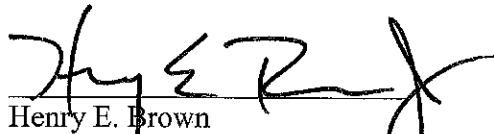
Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



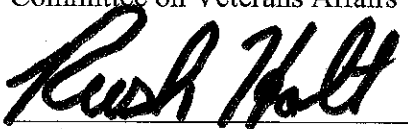
Bob Filner
Chair
Committee on Veterans Affairs



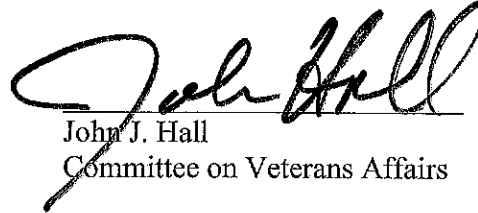
Michael H. Michaud
Chair, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Veterans Affairs



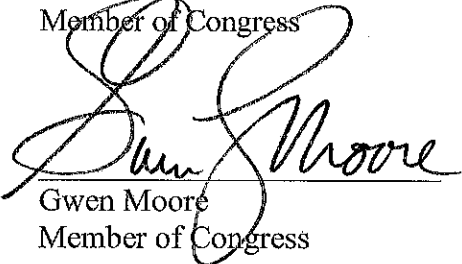
Henry E. Brown
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Veterans Affairs



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



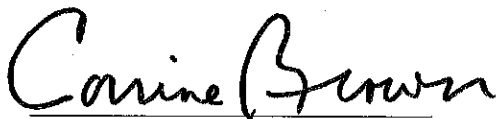
John J. Hall
Committee on Veterans Affairs



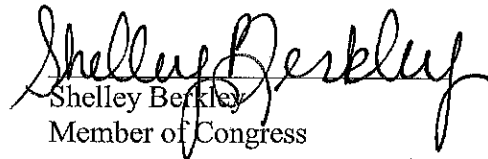
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Mike Ross
Member of Congress



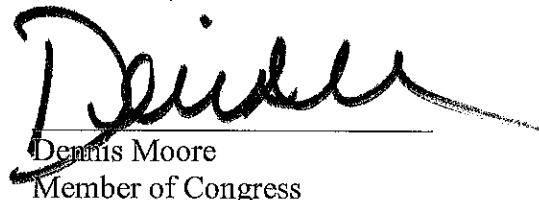
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress



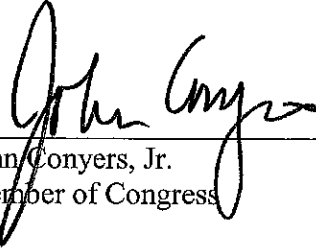
Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



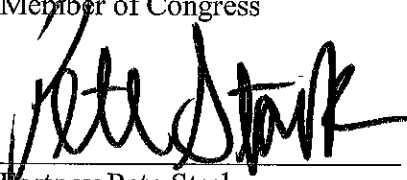
Dennis Moore
Member of Congress



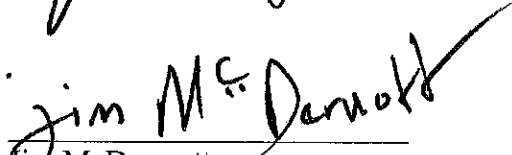
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



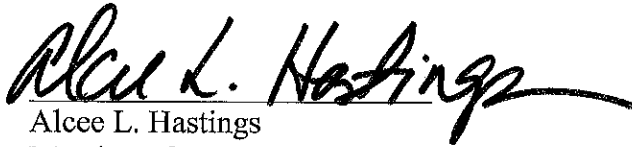
John Conyers, Jr.
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Portney Pete Stark
Member of Congress



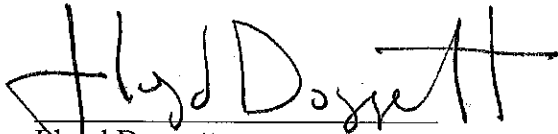
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress




Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



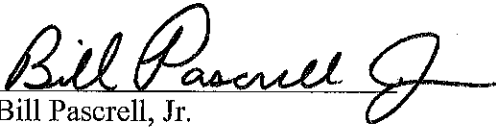
Steven Kagen
Member of Congress



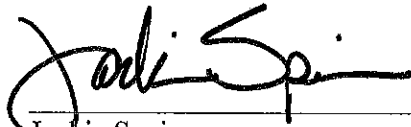
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress