

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

On behalf of all people living with multiple sclerosis (MS), we would like to thank you for your past support for funding MS research through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). As you know, MS is a chronic, unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system. MS is generally diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, during the prime of an individual's life. Sadly, the cause of MS is still unknown and there is no cure. While we recognize the fiscal constraints the country faces, it is critical that we continue to fund this important research, which holds great promise for our military service members and all those who are affected by MS. **We respectfully ask that you direct \$10 million to fund the MS research program for Fiscal Year 2016.**

MS interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with the disease. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research are improving the possibility of a world free of MS.

Currently, the FDA-approved treatments that are available to treat MS only slow the progression of the disease for a subset of the MS population. Of these available medical treatments, many are not effective for patients and cannot be tolerated by many others. Additionally, the cost of treating and living with MS is costly--approximately \$69,000 annually.

Many U.S. veterans have stories and symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Preliminary evidence suggests that some combat veterans could have an increased risk of developing MS.

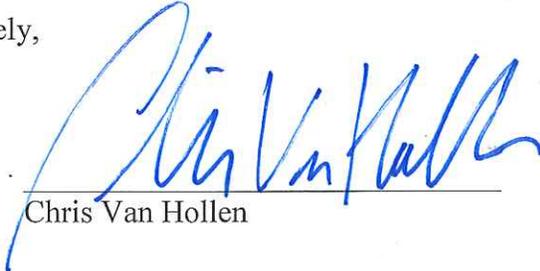
- Over 23,000 veterans are being treated for MS through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- A study in the *Annals of Neurology* identified 5,345 cases of "service-connected" MS among U.S. veterans.
- An epidemiologic study found a two-fold increase in MS between 1993 and 2000 in Kuwait, which suggests a potential environmental trigger for MS.
- The VA is currently funding two MS Centers of Excellence to provide clinical care and education for these veterans, but now physicians at these institutions are seeking funding to explore a potential link between MS and combat service.

MS research has the potential to help all those living with MS, including our and veterans. We ask that you support MS research by including \$10 million in funding for the MS program within the CDMRP in the Fiscal Year 2016 Defense Appropriations. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.



Chris Van Hollen



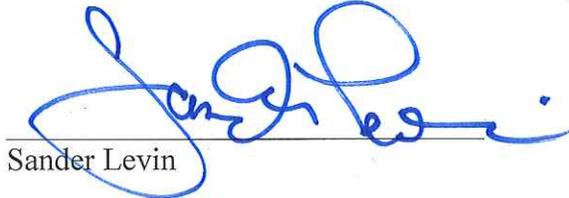
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.



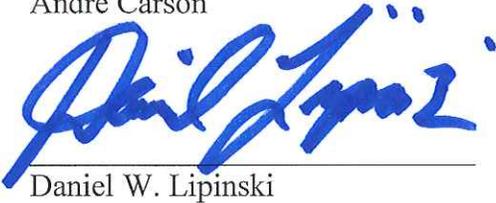
Eliot L. Engel



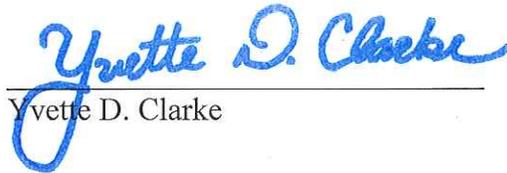
André Carson



Sander Levin



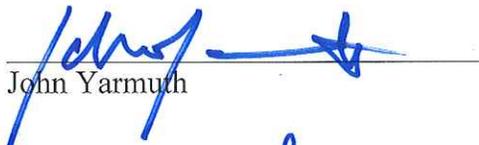
Daniel W. Lipinski



Yvette D. Clarke



James R. Langevin



John Yarmuth



Charles B. Rangel



Frederica S. Wilson



Dan Benishek, M.D.



Al Green



Dan Kildee



John Conyers, Jr.

Peter DeFazio

Peter DeFazio

Peter King

Peter King

Sheila Jackson Lee

Sheila Jackson Lee

Beto O'Rourke

Beto O'Rourke

Tony Cárdenas

Tony Cárdenas

Alice L. Hastings

Alice L. Hastings

Christopher H. Smith

Christopher H. Smith

Brian Higgins

Brian Higgins

Raúl M. Grijalva

Raúl M. Grijalva

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee

Ron Kind

Ron Kind

Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Adam B. Schiff

Adam B. Schiff

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett

Ann McLane Kuster

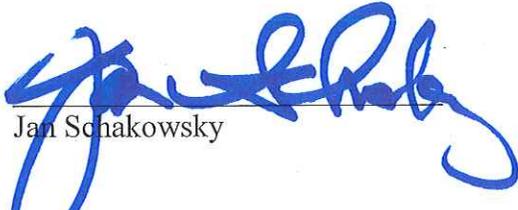
Ann McLane Kuster

Joe Courtney

Joe Courtney

Ted Deutch

Ted Deutch



Jan Schakowsky



Corrine Brown



Jackie Speier



Linda T. Sánchez



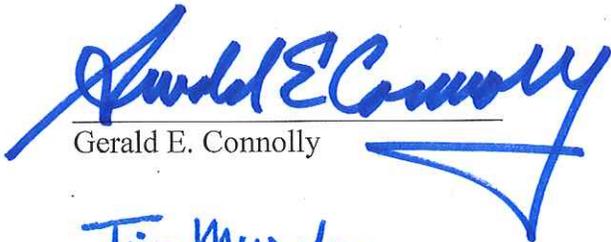
Steve Cohen



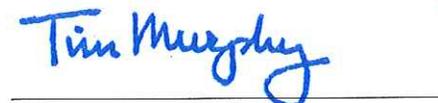
Luis V. Gutiérrez



Zoe Lofgren



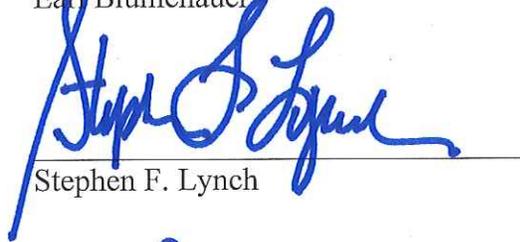
Gerald E. Connolly



Tim Murphy



Earl Blumenauer



Stephen F. Lynch



Joseph Kennedy III



Chellie Pingree



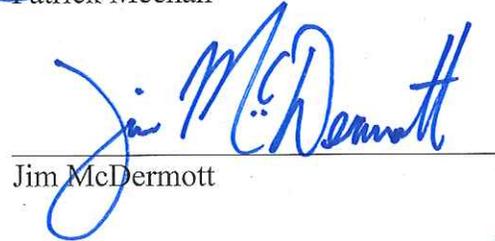
David N. Cicilline



Bill Foster



Patrick Meehan



Jim McDermott



Elijah E. Cummings



Stacey Plaskett



Lois Frankel



Chaka Fattah



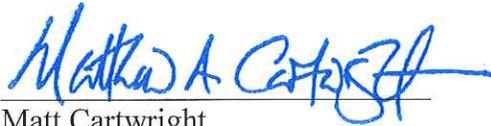
Kathleen M. Rice



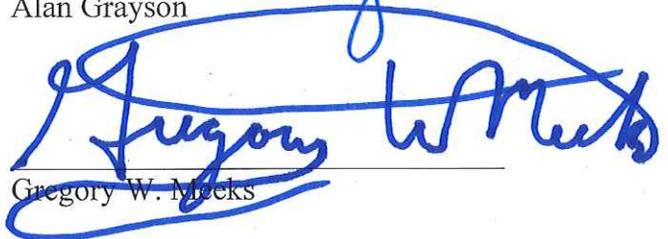
Dave Loebsock



Alan Grayson



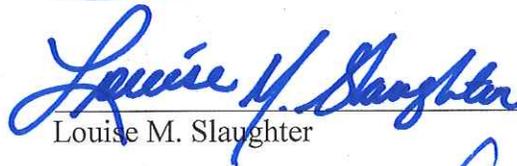
Matt Cartwright



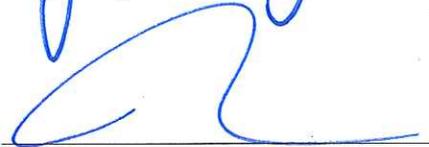
Gregory W. Meeks



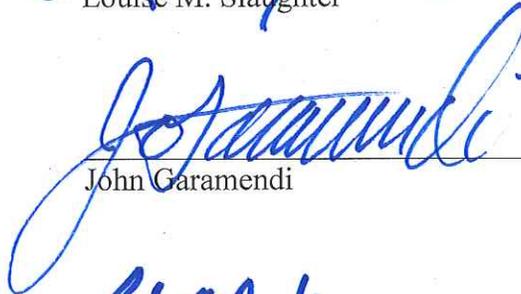
Juan Vargas



Louise M. Slaughter



John Delaney



John Garamendi



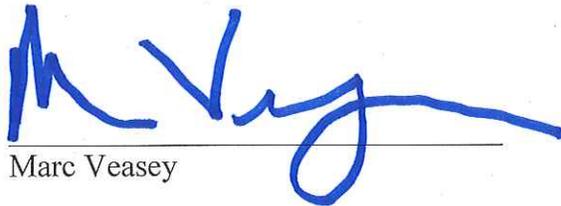
Paul D. Tonko



Robert A. Brady



Jim Himes



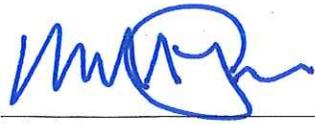
Marc Veasey



Julia Brownley



Cheri Bustos



Mark Pocan



Ben Ray Lujan



Elizabeth H. Esty



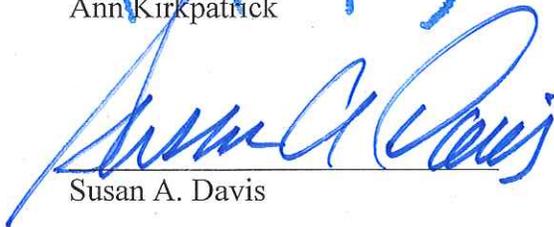
Gwen S. Moore



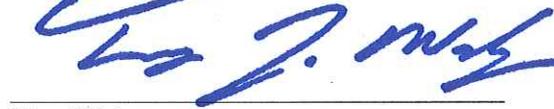
Ann Kirkpatrick



Grace Meng



Susan A. Davis



Tim Walz



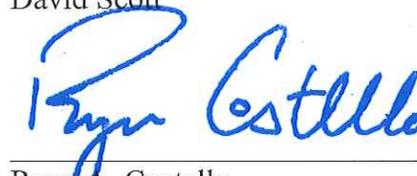
Bill Pascrell, Jr.



David Scott



Sean Patrick Maloney



Ryan A. Costello



Renee Ellmers



Wm. Lacy Clay



Peter Welch



Glenn 'GT' Thompson



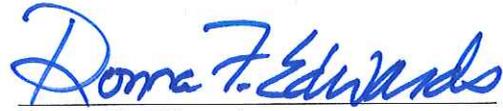
Kathy Castor



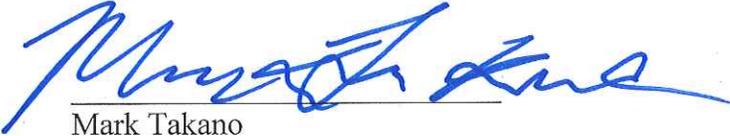
Albio Sires



Scott Peters



Donna F. Edwards



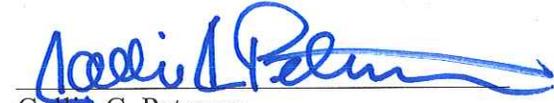
Mark Takano



Walter B. Jones



David Price



Collin C. Peterson