

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you maintain inclusion of stomach cancer as eligible for research funding under the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP).

Continued funding for the PRCRP offers an important opportunity to study diseases like stomach cancer that are not well understood, have few treatment options, and for which military service confers a higher risk.

This year, an estimated 24,000 Americans will learn they have stomach cancer, and nearly 11,000 will die from the disease. According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), about 80 percent of people with stomach cancer are diagnosed with advanced metastatic cancer. At Stage IV, the five-year survival rate is merely four percent. Late diagnosis occurs because stomach cancer has very few warning signs. At present, there are very few treatment options to offer those diagnosed with stomach cancer, particularly at late stage.

The Department of Veterans Affairs considers stomach cancer to be a service-connected malignancy for service members who experienced hazardous exposure to ionizing radiation. Additionally, research studies have shown that U.S. soldiers living under field conditions may be at greater risk of *H. pylori* infections. This is significant because according to the NCI, individuals with this chronic infection carry a 3- to 6-fold higher risk of developing gastric cancer.

Incidence rates of stomach cancer have risen significantly in certain subpopulations, particularly those aged 25-39. This data from the NCI's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (SEER) is significant because the expected frequency of stomach cancer overall has declined over the past 80 years in the United States.

Stomach cancer continues to receive one of the lowest amounts of research funding per cancer death from the National Cancer Institute. Thus, funding for stomach cancer research through the PRCRP has the potential to make an enormous difference in understanding this under-researched cancer, including the array of risk factors and causal mechanisms, such as military service, that contribute to stomach cancer and the disturbing upward trend in its incidence among young adults.

We believe maintaining stomach cancer research eligibility has the potential to benefit military service members and their families and to vastly improve the state of stomach cancer research in this country for all who are or

who will be diagnosed with this terrible disease. Therefore, we respectfully ask for your support in maintaining stomach cancer as eligible for research through the PRCRP.

Sincerely,



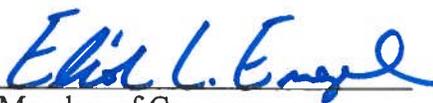
LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



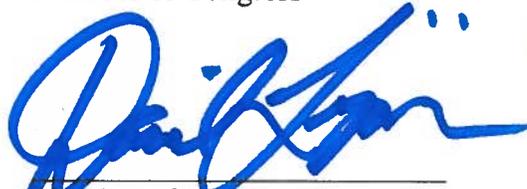
Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



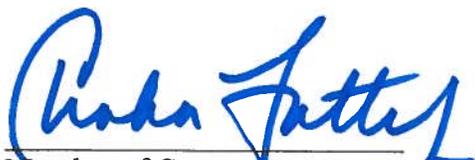
Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

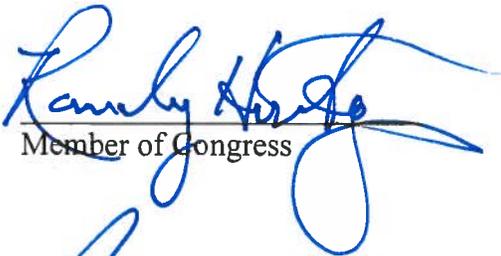

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



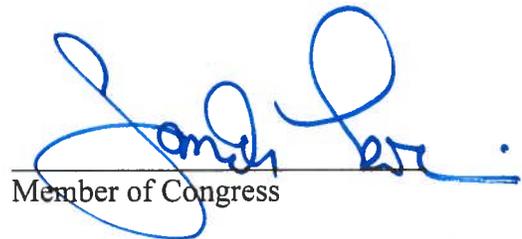
Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress