

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Defense
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
2205 Rayburn House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chairwoman McCollum, and Ranking Member Calvert:

In support of the Congressional Lupus Caucus and on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Americans living with lupus, we are writing to express our support for critically important lupus programs in the FY 2022 Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bills.

We respectfully request the following in the Department of Defense appropriations bill:

\$15 million for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program’s Peer-Reviewed Lupus Research Program. Emerging research has found that those who serve in the military may be at greater risk of developing lupus. This is because post-traumatic stress disorder, which is experienced by 20 to 30 percent of service members, has been shown to be associated with a 2-fold increase in risk for autoimmune diseases. Robust funding for this program will support the development of innovative, high impact research to advance the understanding of lupus and improve outcomes for our active-duty Service Members, Veterans, their families, and other Americans with lupus. After initial Congressional funding in 2017, the response to the first three Department of Defense grant solicitations by the nation’s research community has been overwhelmingly positive—a total of 334 grant applications were received during the program’s first three years, representing an estimated \$120 million in requested funding. The \$5 million provided in each of the program’s first three years allowed funding for only 38 projects, or less than 12 percent of the submitted proposals. As a result, two years ago, Congress doubled the funding for the program, bringing the allocation to \$10 million. It is critical that this funding level continues growing so more of these promising research proposals are funded.

In addition, we ask that you consider the following funding requests in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill:

\$10.5 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chronic Prevention and Health Promotion, National Lupus Patient Registry. Since 2003, Congress has continued funding for the National Lupus Registry Program and the program has made important strides in lupus research and education. For example, the program funded research to help determine the incidence and prevalence of the disease in the United States and identified racial disparities in the disease—that African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American women are two to three times more likely to develop the disease.

The program also has supported research that found higher death rates in African Americans with lupus, and research supported by the program, published in 2021, found that death rates are six times higher among Hispanic women and four times higher in Asian women than Caucasians. In addition to supporting research identifying racial and ethnic disparities, in FY 2019, the Registry program funded research into childhood lupus in order to learn more about the impacts of the disease on the pediatric population. The program continues to educate the public, including health care providers, about lupus in order to speed time to diagnosis and ensure people receive the care they need as soon as possible. Funding is needed to continue this important work.

\$2 million for the Office of the HHS Secretary, Office of Minority Health, National Lupus Training, Outreach and Clinical Trial Program—Previous Congressional appropriations have enabled the Office of Minority Health to identify barriers to minority participation in clinical trials and resulted in the development of clinical trial action plans. Continued funding is needed to implement these action plans and increase minority participation in clinical trials with a focus on African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans, populations that are at a greater risk of developing the disease. This funding will encourage enrollment in trials and help ensure trials are representative of the lupus population in order to, ultimately, accelerate the development of new treatments for the disease. Moreover, increased minority participation in clinical trials can help generate more robust efficacy data in minorities, helping to ensure these populations have access to new treatments.

Thank you for your support of these initiatives.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

/s/ Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/ Bill Posey
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Colin Allred
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

/s/ Al Green
Member of Congress

/s/ Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

/s/ David Scott
Member of Congress

/s/ John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

/s/ Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

/s/ Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

/s/ Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

/s/ André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/ James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

/s/ G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/ Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

/s/ Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Levin
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

/s/ Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/ Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

/s/ Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/ Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/ Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

/s/ Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/ Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress

/s/ Jared Golden
Member of Congress

/s/ Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s/ James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

/s/ Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Bill Foster
Member of Congress

/s/ Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

/s/ Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/ Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

/s/ Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Kim
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Costa
Member of Congress