

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2018

Chairman Richard Shelby  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Richard Durbin  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
115 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin,

We write to request that you include **\$15 million in the Fiscal Year 2019 Department of Defense Appropriations bill for the Neurofibromatosis Research Program**

**(NFRP)**. Significant advances in Neurofibromatosis (NF) research have been made over the past several years, due in large part to the NFRP. To build upon this progress, continued investment in the NFRP is necessary to promote treatments and find a cure for the numerous diseases associated with NF.

NF is a highly variable and unpredictable genetic disorder of the nervous system, affecting nearly every organ system in the body. NF causes tumors to grow along nerves in the skin, just below the skin, in the brain, and in the spinal cord. NF is the most common neurological disorder caused by a single gene and impacts more people than Cystic Fibrosis, hereditary Muscular Dystrophy, Huntington's disease, and Tay Sachs combined.

NF can also cause a myriad of devastating clinical problems, including nerve and brain tumors, disfiguring skin growths, bone defects that may require limb amputation, unmanageable chronic pain, deafness, blindness, cardiovascular defects, vascular disease, and learning disabilities. NF gene mutations are also important 'drivers' of cancers in the lungs, liver, brain, and breast.

Genetic information learned from studying NF through the NFRP has shown to be pivotal to understanding many health issues impacting both war fighters and the general population. These conditions include cancer, bone fracture and repair, vascular disease, wound healing, nerve tumors and repair, pain, and behavior and psychosocial issues, including learning disabilities and autism.

Recognizing NF's importance to both the military and to the general population, Congress has given the NFRP strong bipartisan support over the years. This allows the NFRP to fund innovative, groundbreaking research that would unlikely be pursued otherwise and enables major advances in NF research, such as the development of a nation-wide clinical trials infrastructure.

The NFRP has shown tangible and meaningful results for direct military application while elucidating broad implications for the general population. Based upon these developments and the promise of future developments through this program, we respectfully request that you include \$15 million for the Neurofibromatosis Research Program in the FY 2019 Department of Defense Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



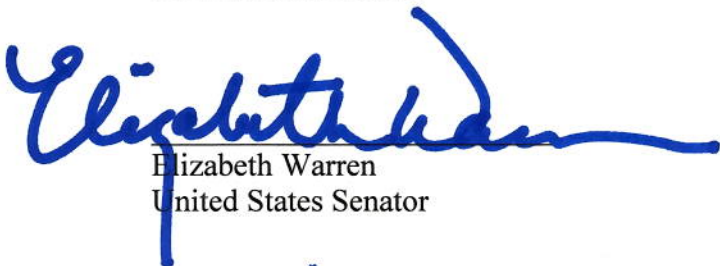
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United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



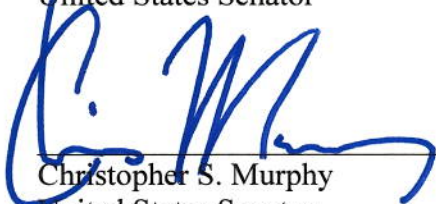
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



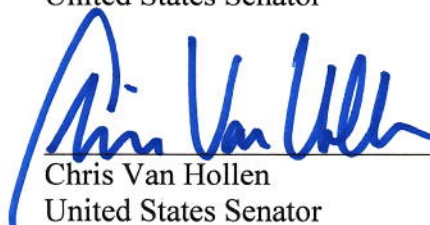
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator




Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator




Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

  
Bernard Sanders  
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