

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 11, 2005

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
H-149 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Murtha
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Murtha:

We appreciate your strong support of biomedical research critical to people suffering from neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and ALS that is being conducted by the Department of Defense's Neurotoxin Exposure Treatment Program (NETRP). We respectfully request that you include in Conference the House-passed funding level of \$26.5 million for the Neurotoxin Exposure Treatment Program (NETRP) in the U.S. Army Military Operational Medicine Research Program under the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command for the Fiscal Year 2006.

As you are aware, American troops are routinely exposed to a wide range of chemicals, low-level radiation, and other external stressors and toxins such as jet fuel, radar, sonar, lasers, pesticides, herbicides, and head injury. Scientists believe these exposures increase the risk of developing neurodegenerative conditions, particularly Parkinson's disease, but also Alzheimer's, and ALS. These conditions negatively impact the readiness of American military forces since they all result in the permanent loss of brain and nerve cells.

Thus, the NETRP was established to investigate the causes, diagnosis, and treatments of Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases. Understanding how exposures occur, the incidence of disease afterwards, and how these conditions may be effectively treated, cured, or prevented will allow the Department of Defense (DoD) to better protect military personnel and minimize the risk of future exposures. The scientific findings from biomedical research conducted through the NETRP may provide DoD with innovations in materiel design, avoidance protocols for unnecessary harmful exposures, and neuroprotective drugs to prevent damage in the first place, which will considerably improve military readiness. Furthermore, the early detection of nerve cell loss caused by such toxic exposures may provide DoD with better methods of evaluating warfighter performance and faster ways of detecting potential impairments, which also contributes to greater military preparedness.

However, the military is not the only recipient of the benefits of the NETRP, as any research breakthroughs in prevention, detection, and treatment of neurodegenerative conditions may be immediately applied to civilians—particularly the more than one million Americans with Parkinson's disease and the 60,000 people diagnosed each year.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to provide \$26.5 million in funding for the DoD peer reviewed NETRP in the Fiscal Year 2006 Conference Committee. This level of funding is necessary to prevent cuts to critical NETRP funded research projects being conducted in 22 states. On-going projects include research establishing hereditary links to Parkinson's disease – opening the door to developing new treatments for both hereditary and environmentally induced Parkinson's. This important research is expediting the discovery process, significantly advancing the science of neurology, and enhancing military readiness.

Thank you again for your continued leadership and support for this program essential in the fight to prevent and treat military men and women and all of the heroic Americans who suffer from Parkinson's and other neurological diseases. Please contact Amanda Wimmer at 202-225-5905 or Eben Carle at 202-225-3665 for any further information regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Lane Evans

LANE EVANS
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

CAROLYN MALONEY
Member of Congress

Sherwood Boehlert

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT
Member of Congress

Mark Udall

MARK UDALL
Member of Congress