

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 10, 2024

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
122 Dirksen SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
115 Dirksen SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Tester and Ranking Member Collins,

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations process, we write to respectfully request that you support the strongest possible funding for the Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health Research program within the Department of Defense (DoD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDRMP). Since FY1992, the CDRMP has managed nearly \$20 billion in appropriations for peer-reviewed research, focused on a wide variety of critical health issues. The program has a proven track record of contributing to medical breakthroughs.

The peer-reviewed Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health Research Program (TBIPHRP) was established in FY2007 in response to the increase of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and psychological health issues experienced by our servicemembers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBIs have become known as the “signature wound” from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, effecting hundreds of thousands of servicemembers. Many of our servicemembers—whether they experience combat or not—are frequently exposed to explosive weapons during training exercises and in the field. These weapons can produce damaging shockwaves—known as blast overpressure, where the pressure caused by the shockwave is above normal atmospheric pressure—and we need to better understand the potential physical, cognitive, and behavioral impacts that exposure to these shockwaves can have on servicemembers. TBIs from exposure to weapons is a common yet misunderstood phenomenon; researchers in Afghanistan found that 75% of the troops’ exposure to blasts were coming from their own weapons. In just three months in 2023, DoD provided treatment to servicemembers nearly 50,000 times for TBI.

Sadly, there have been too many examples of the tragedies that can occur as a result of untreated TBIs, and funding for programs like the TBIPHRP will help improve prevention, assessment, and treatment of these conditions. This program currently complements ongoing DoD efforts to

promote better standards of care of TBIs and psychological health, and robust funding will further support better standards of care for psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to provide the strongest possible funding for the Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health Research Program in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. We appreciate your commitment to addressing TBIs and supporting our servicemembers and veterans and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



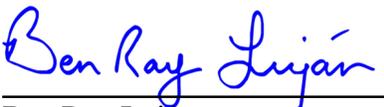
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senator



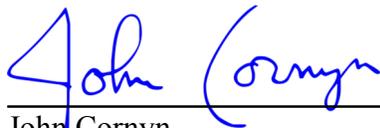
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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



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Mike Rounds  
United States Senator



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John Cornyn  
United States Senator