

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405, Main Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Calvert,

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, and other Members of Congress, respectfully request increased funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 to identify and care for wounded warriors with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health issues and to improve research in these critical areas.

As you well know, TBI continues to be the signature injury among our nation's service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 400,000 troops have been diagnosed with mild TBI since 2000. This number continues to increase as identification and detection methods become more accurate. TBI is a complex condition that requires comprehensive, specialized care. In recent years, the DOD has made significant strides in improving both in-theater and post-incident assessment and diagnosis, but still more needs to be done in evaluating troops' ability to return to duty. Intensive and innovative rehabilitation care is also needed for those sustaining severe TBIs and left with varying levels of disorders of consciousness.

Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Programs – Psychological Health/Traumatic Brain Injury

The Psychological Health and TBI Research Program, through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, was created by Congress in Fiscal Year 2007 in response to the injuries sustained by our servicemen and women in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the funding that this program provides, researchers are working in a collaborative manner to prevent, mitigate, and treat the effects of TBI and other psychological health conditions. While we have made great strides, there is still much that we do not know about TBIs acquired through military service, particularly the impact and mechanics of blast injury. We commend the committee's decision to fully fund the Psychological Health and TBI Research Program at \$165 million, level with FY21 enacted funding, and urge them to continue to fully fund this program in FY2022.

Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence (TBICoE):

Since 1992, the TBICoE, formerly the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, has coordinated care for our service members from the battlefield to the community and has engaged in a wide range of TBI research to improve state of the art medical treatment and rehabilitation. Increased funding would allow the work of TBICoE to continue focusing on enhanced screening techniques for better evaluation, treatment, follow-up, and staying at the forefront of developing technology for field detection of TBI. TBICoE will also continue its multi-center clinical trials to improve medication and rehabilitation and maintain the 15-year longitudinal study as mandated by the NDAA.

National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE):

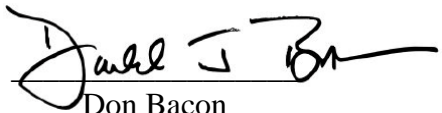
NICoE is responsible for treating military personnel diagnosed with TBI and/or PH for which other programs have not proven successful. We must address the incidence of suicide and the myriad of psychological problems our troops are experiencing as a result of their service on the battlefield. It is imperative that our troops receive every possible opportunity to receive the care and rehabilitation they need and deserve to either return to theater or to reenter the civilian workforce. We urge robust funding for NICoE in order to maintain the health of our servicemembers.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests to improve medical care and bolster vital research within the Department of Defense. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Traumatic Brain Injury DOD Program Letter, FY22
List of Signatories
April 27, 2021

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