

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Defense

Rep. James R. Langevin (RI-02)

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Thank you, Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky, for allowing Members outside the Appropriations Committee to testify on matters of importance and priority. I serve on the House Armed Services Committee, and I wish to bring several matters before you for consideration as the Fiscal Year 2018 Defense Appropriations bill is formulated.

First, one of my highest priorities is ensuring robust funding for several programs under the Defense Health Program, specifically, the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (SCIRP). SCIRP was established by Congress under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program to advance research and innovative technologies to regenerate and repair damaged spinal cords, as well as improve rehabilitation therapies.

Studies have identified a marked increase in the rate of combat-related spine trauma among casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to a study published in the September 2012 issue of The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, the incidence of spinal injuries among combat casualties in the Global War on Terrorism are among the highest in American military medical history.

Research into spinal cord injury treatment is producing a wealth of discoveries that are making the repair and regeneration of the spinal cord a potentially attainable goal. Major improvements in emergency and acute care have improved overall survival rates; however, the

devastating nature of these injuries imparts substantial disability, borne by wounded service members, their families, and the American health care system.

The societal costs of spinal cord injuries in terms of health care utilization, disability payments, and lost income are disproportionately high for this particular patient population compared to those suffering from other medical conditions. According to information published by the Reeve Foundation, developing therapies for individuals with a spinal cord injury and preventing new cases would save the United States as much as \$400 billion on future direct and indirect lifetime costs. Remarkable advancements in treatment are now ripe for further development, including clinical trials, but these next steps will only be achieved if we continue robust investment in the Spinal Cord Injury Research program and larger individual grant awards.

Additionally, I hope you will provide ample support for the various additional Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) programs, all of which provide critical care through the Department of Defense to our men and women in uniform, as well as our citizens across the country. Such programs include the (1) Trauma Clinical Research Program; (2) Multiple Sclerosis Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program; (3) Tuberous Sclerosis Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program; (4) Ovarian Cancer Research Program; (5) ALS Research Program; (6) Breast Cancer in Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program; and (7) Pediatric Brain Tumor Research.

Second, we must ensure that we continue to support our vital submarine programs at the highest levels possible, particularly the (1) VIRGINIA class; (2) Virginia Payload Module; (3) Moored Training Ship; and (4) COLUMBIA class programs, all of which maintain our

dominance in the undersea domain and provide the day-to-day nuclear deterrent as part of the triad.

As you know, the COLUMBIA class SSBN program is the Navy's highest acquisition priority and is being designed by our nation's best and brightest to have a longer service life, better operational availability, and improved survivability than its predecessors – all at a reasonable cost and with the most advanced capabilities available. The need is urgent: the current OHIO class force will begin retirement in 2027 and must be replaced. The COLUMBIA class program is out of margin in its timeline, and we must continue to support this program at the highest levels possible lest we fall behind schedule and suffer cost overruns.

For this reason, it is also vital the Committee support Advanced Procurement funds for these programs to support procurement of long lead time material and advanced manufacturing efforts, so that we can maintain the on-time deliveries of our submarines to support our Navy's operational needs and to minimize the projected shortfall of fast attack submarines starting in the mid-2020s.

Third, I urge your support for the rapid development, prototyping, and fielding and integration of new and advanced technologies. New tools are being at record speed, on a larger scale, and with a cost-effectiveness that will exploit our enduring advantages over our competitors. Technologies such as directed energy and hypersonics are truly game-changing tools for our arsenal, and these technologies are at the forefront of the Third Offset Strategy.

Each military department has a marquee program in this area demonstrating military utility that must be supported, including (1) the Air Force's Counter-electronics High Power Microwave Advanced Missile Project (CHAMP); (2) the Army's High Energy Laser Mobile Demonstrator (HELMD); and (3) the Navy's Laser Weapon System (LaWS) that is currently

deployed aboard the USS PONCE in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the Department of Defense's Non-Lethal Weapons Program, housed at the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate at MCB Quantico, continues to provide vital escalation-of-force options in order to minimize civilian casualties and reduce collateral damage in places of interest across the world.

Too often, capable and proven directed energy weapon systems languish in perpetual research and development. As these systems reach their maturity and risk-mitigation techniques are applied, we must provide our military with tactical and strategic advantages wherever and whenever appropriate.

Next-generation weapon capabilities like directed energy are needed now and in the future to address the rising number of threats facing our country. I therefore urge this Committee to dedicate sufficient resources for developing physical prototypes of directed energy weapon systems to enable those men and women in the fight to fully explore the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) necessary for the eventual use of matured directed energy weapon systems.

Finally, as we have seen over the past decade, cyber intrusions into American networks and systems have become more prevalent and more deleterious than ever before. I have been encouraged by the Department of Defense's efforts to develop a unified cybersecurity strategy and solidify cyberspace doctrine in order to protect our nation against the many threats we face today. The Department is well positioned to capitalize on these activities thanks to the recent elevation of U.S. Cyber Command to its own combatant command, as well as its Cyber Mission Force development. Great strides have been made to strengthen the Persistent Training Environment (PTE) for our service branches so that they have more opportunities to put fingers to keyboard in realistic conflict scenarios, but we must continue to fund this effort. While joint

exercises such as Cyber Guard and Cyber Flag are critical in training our cyber warriors, we must ensure there are more opportunities to train for the missions yet to come. These investments deserve our continued support, and we must work tirelessly to ensure that the Department of Defense is resourced appropriately to defend against adversarial threats.

I want to thank you once again for receiving my testimony and taking my requests into consideration for the Fiscal Year 2018 Defense Appropriations bill. These investments are critical in providing for our collective national security, and I encourage their inclusion.