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February 2, 2026

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Dear Chairman Luttrell and Ranking Member McGarvey:

On behalf of ALS Network and the individuals living with ALS and families we serve, we submit this statement for the record for the Subcommittee's February 3, 2026, legislative hearing in strong support of the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2025 (H.R. 1685).

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often referred to as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," is a fatal, progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. ALS slowly robs a person of the ability to walk, speak, move, and ultimately breathe. There is no cure, and the disease often progresses rapidly, forcing individuals and families to confront profound medical, emotional, and financial challenges on an unforgiving timeline.

For veterans and their families, an ALS diagnosis often follows years of honorable service and sacrifice. While the Department of Veterans Affairs appropriately recognizes ALS as service-connected, current survivor benefit structures do not adequately reflect the medical realities of this disease. Under existing law, eligibility for increased Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for surviving spouses is tied to whether a veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. For individuals with ALS, this requirement is frequently impossible to meet, not because the need is any less severe, but because the disease progresses too quickly.

The Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2025 offers a clear remedy. H.R. 1685 would ensure surviving spouses of veterans who die from ALS are not denied increased survivor compensation solely because the disease does not allow sufficient time to satisfy an arbitrary duration requirement. Military families should not be penalized because ALS is rapidly progressive and terminal.

ALS Network appreciates the Subcommittee's focus on disability and survivor benefits and is grateful for the bipartisan leadership supporting H.R. 1685. We respectfully urge the Subcommittee to advance the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2025 and to ensure veterans' families affected by ALS receive survivor benefits that align with medical reality and honor their service and sacrifice.

Thank you,



Sheri Strahl, President & CEO



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