

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
S-128 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
S-146A Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin:

On behalf of the thousands of Americans touched each year by ovarian cancer, we are writing to express our strong support for maintaining and increasing the funding for the Department of Defense Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP). We respectfully request that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense provide \$30 million for the OCRP in Fiscal Year 2019.

One in 75 women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime, and less than half will survive for five years. A full quarter will die within the first year of diagnosis. It is expected that more than 22,200 women will be diagnosed with the disease this year and that more than 14,000 women will die from their ovarian cancer.

Of the 850,000 female service members, wives of active duty military and adult daughters of active duty military¹, approximately 11,800 will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer over the course of their lifetimes². With no early detection method for ovarian cancer, surgery is the only method for diagnosis. Surgical procedures to address the possibility of ovarian cancer can be disruptive and costly to the readiness of our military. The cost of ovarian cancer to our military is great, not only in terms of troop readiness, but also in terms of healthcare costs: treating these cases of ovarian cancer over these patients' lifetimes could cost TRICARE an estimated \$971.2 million³.

¹ Military Demographics for 2012:

http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf.

² The lifetime risk of a women developing ovarian cancer is 1.4% according to the SEER Fact Sheet available here: <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/ovary.html>.

³ The average cost of frontline ovarian cancer therapy is \$82,000, per the National Institutes of Health. <http://costprojections.cancer.gov/annual.costs.html>.

The OCRP supports high-impact innovative research that promotes readiness for military members and their families as well as the overall health of citizens of the United States and the world. The OCRP is leading to significant breakthroughs in understanding the precursor lesion/stem cell, microenvironment, and pathogenesis/ progression of all types of ovarian cancer, including rare subtypes. It is developing and improving performance and reliability of screening, diagnostic approaches, and treatment and investigating tumor response to therapy, including tumor survival, dormancy, cell death, clonal evolution, resistance, and tumor heterogeneity. While the knowledge generated by OCRP research will impact the screening, detection, and treatment of ovarian cancer, it also has generalizable applications such as identifying substances in a person's blood, developing better vaccines, and understanding why cells mutate when exposed to certain conditions. This knowledge can be used by all scientists, including those looking to develop and protect our military from various biomedical threats. The strategic partnerships fostered by the OCRP between our military, patients, clinicians, and scientists are accelerating discovery.

While we recognize that your Subcommittee has the difficult job of setting priorities among the many needs of our nation, the OCRP has a record of success in recruiting and supporting young investigators who work to improve prevention, early diagnosis, and survival rates from ovarian cancer. The OCRP is making a difference in the lives of the millions of Americans, including our military and their families.

Thank you again for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,


ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



TAMMY DUCKWORTH
United States Senator


RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator


SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator


SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator

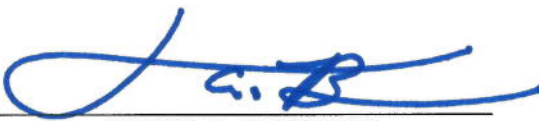

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

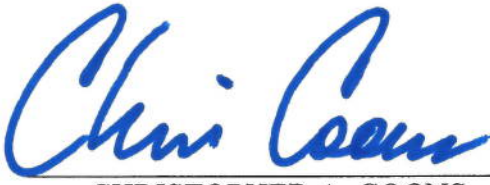

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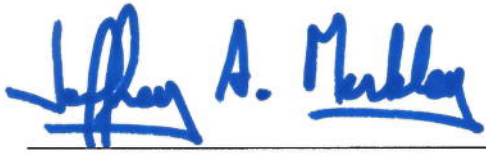

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