March 31, 2014

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As your subcommittee begins work on the Fiscal Year 2015 Defense Appropriations legislation, we respectfully request the inclusion of $30 million for peer-reviewed orthopaedic research.

Peer-reviewed orthopaedic research has been authorized in the past and has received funding in previous Defense Appropriations legislation as well as supplemental appropriations through two programs: first through the Orthopaedic Extremity Trauma Research Program (OETRP), and recently through the Peer-Reviewed Orthopaedic Research Program (PRORP). These programs have become critical to the treatment of our wounded servicemen and woman returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and a sustainment in program funding is essential to fulfilling the debt of gratitude we owe to those who protect our freedom. This program (PRORP) is peer reviewed and awarded through a competitive grant program to ensure the most efficient use of resources.

A U.S. Army analysis of soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan shows that extremity injuries account for the greatest proportion of medical resource utilization and cause the greatest number of disabled soldiers, with about 82 percent of the injuries in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom involve the extremities. Soldiers with extremity injuries had the longest average inpatient stays and accounted for 65 percent of total inpatient resource utilization and 64 percent of projected disability benefits costs in the future. The projected disability cost for extremity injuries sustained in this conflict to date, exclusive of any short or long-term medical costs, is approximately $1.2 billion.

The need for this research has never been greater and more immediate. We hope that the subcommittee will provide $30 million in the FY 2015 Defense Appropriations legislation to ensure this important work can continue to assist those who have made tremendous sacrifices while defending our nation.

Sincerely,

RON BARBER
Member of Congress

DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress
COLLEEN HANABUSA  
Member of Congress

ANN KIRKPATRICK  
Member of Congress

DAVID CICILLINE  
Member of Congress

JUDY CHU  
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RAUL M. GRIJALVA  
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