THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
WWW.LEGION.ORG • 1608 K ST. N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-2801 • P: (202) 861-2700

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Calvert:

I am writing you today to urge you to support including $25 million in the FY 2022 Defense Appropriations Bill for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Research.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization and for the last 101 years has been a leading voice on advocating for active-duty personnel and veterans. We currently have nearly 1.8 million members and 13,000 posts around the world.

Two of the signature injuries of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have been PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In response, in 2008 Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) provided funding that established research consortiums for PTSD and TBI.

In the case of PTSD, the consortium has been anchored by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio with major collaborators being Ft. Hood, University of Pennsylvania, Yale University and Duke University. It has focused on the development and evaluation of evidence-based assessment, treatment, and prevention programs for combat-related PTSD in warfighters and veterans.

The PTSD Consortium was initially funded in 2008 for 5 years by the DoD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. In 2013, the DoD and the Veterans Administration (VA) worked together to fund the consortium again for another 5 years with the availability to do a two year no cost extension. It has conducted of over 60 critical research projects including the collaboration of over 40 research institutions and over 150 investigators nationwide. As part of this research effort, they have assessed almost 20,000 warfighters and treated nearly 4,000 active-duty personnel with PTSD.

Although DoD and VA have provided additional funding for the TBI consortium starting in 2019, they have not provided similar additional funding for the PTSD consortium. As a result of this lapse in funding, there are no core DoD dollars allocated for the study of PTSD.

The American Legion believes that Congress should provide additional funding for PTSD research for FY 2022. Through Resolution No. 9, *Appointment of TBI/PTSD Committee*, The American Legion has resolved, to investigate the existing science and procedures as well as alternative methods for treating TBI and PTSD not currently being employed by DoD or VA, for the purpose of determining if such alternative treatments are practical and efficacious.

Organizations like the PTSD Consortium are critical to advancing this important field of research. We can and must develop interventions to better serve this group of warfighters and veterans who are suffering. This can only be accomplished with additional funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

For God & Country,

James W. "Bill" Oxford

James W. "Bill" Oxford
National Commander
The American Legion