The American Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★
(202) 263-2986 ★

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

March 20, 2013

Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion, I would like to express support for continuing directed funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 for the Peer Reviewed Vision Trauma (PRMR-Vision) Program, funding it at levels of at least $10 million.

Our nation has seen great advances in the fight against many diseases, but much remains to be done for those on the battlefield and combat translational research should be priority for those who deployed and suffer from serious penetrating eye wounds and other eye trauma so that we can begin to improve the visual outcomes for our veterans. Advancements in biomedical research lead to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and ultimately can serve to lower health care costs. Vision problems represent a challenge for many of our returning heroes. As much as 16 percent of all of those wounded or evacuated from the present battles in Iraq and Afghanistan have penetrating eye injuries and Traumatic Brain Injury related visual dysfunction due to blast forces. Furthermore, Traumatic Brain Injury and blast injuries frequently contribute to vision problems, and The American Legion, in the comprehensive Resolution 285 covering Traumatic Brain Injury and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder the American Legion advocates strongly for VA and DoD to increase funding research, screening and diagnosis of these types of disorders.

We strongly urge your support for the directed Peer Reviewed Vision Trauma Program. We appreciate your leadership on these vital defense research programs. The American Legion respectfully asks for your full support.

Sincerely,

James E. "Jim" Koutz

JAMES E. 'Jim' KOUTZ
National Commander