

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Committee on Appropriations
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Committee on Appropriations
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Durbin:

As you and your colleagues work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include \$10 million for autism research through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) rates have continued to rise. Prevalence data released by the CDC showed that ASD in the United States has rapidly increased from 1 in 166 in 2005, to 1 in 68 in 2014 – a nearly 250 percent increase in less than 10 years. On top of that, an estimated 18,600 active duty military children have been diagnosed with ASD. The number of autism diagnoses among active duty family members has increased an alarming 77 percent from FY 2009 to FY 2013.

Families living with autism face significant health, financial, and emotional challenges, which can be exacerbated by military life. Military families are affected substantially by the financial and emotional costs of raising a child with autism and this impact extends to the performance and readiness of service members and their units.

Research findings from CDMRP hold the promise of a significant impact on our military families' quality of life. Research supported by the Autism Research Program has addressed current needs such as access difficulties associated with mobile military families and gastrointestinal (GI) disorders which are among the most common medical conditions associated with autism.

The Department of Defense Autism Research Program has dedicated \$66.9 million to autism research since 2007. We urge you to strengthen this investment. More research is needed to better understand the disorder, develop more effective interventions, and ultimately find a cure. Additionally, we must ensure our military families facing autism have the resources and services they need.

Your support for \$10 million in FY 2017 funding for autism research through the CDMRP will make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



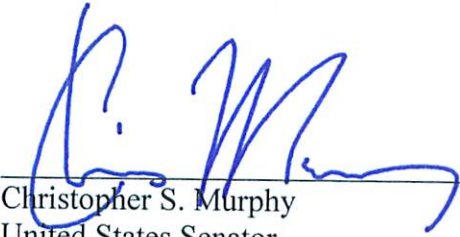
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



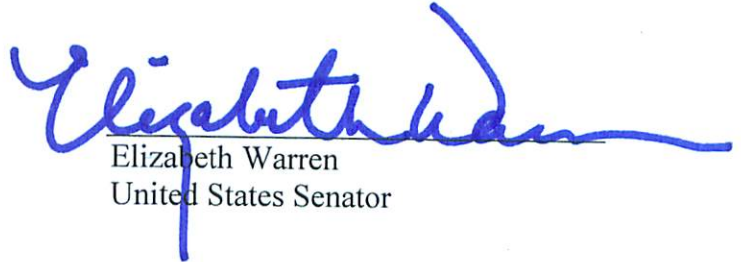
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



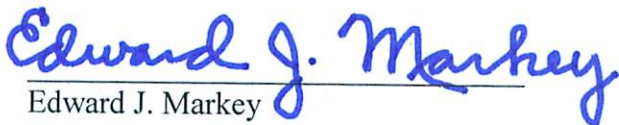
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator