Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2009

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
H-149 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6018

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murtha and Ranking Member Young:

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force and others respectfully request that $350 million be appropriated in the fiscal year 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act to the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) in order to implement the recommendations for traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health (PH) laid out in the Report to Congress from the International Conference on Behavioral Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

As you know, TBI is the signature injury of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, affecting some 360,000 service personnel, and some 300,000 have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or depression. As was made clear during your recent Committee hearing on the work of DCoE, an unprecedented amount of funding has been appropriated for TBI, PTSD, and psychological health. As members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, we want to see that funding used properly to address the needs of wounded warriors as soon as possible and to prevent further injury or complication for our returning service personnel. We are encouraged by the efforts and progress of the DCoE but also want to see results as soon as possible. Consequently, we endorse the recommendations of the Report.

In October 2008, an international group of experts and family members came together at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson, New Jersey for the International Conference on Behavioral Health and Traumatic Brain Injury with the express purpose of compiling a set of recommendations to Congress for improving the care of soldiers with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions. The resulting report lays out specific recommendations for the utilization of research priorities to improve treatment choices, outcomes, and prevention of secondary conditions for all levels of traumatic brain injury and PTSD; innovative tools for outreach, education, and assessment for service personnel and their families; and new, advanced technologies and treatments that are already available in the private sector.

Some of the recommendations have already been initiated by DCoE, while others represent a new path for wounded warrior care. Consequently, we respectfully request $350 million to enhance ongoing projects of the DCoE, implement additional recommended approaches to improving the care and supports for wounded warriors and their families, and provide sufficient program oversight. We need to assure that our brave men and women who are injured in the

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course of duty are given every possible opportunity for the best medical care, rehabilitation, and community reentry assistance that we as a nation can provide.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to help serve our troops.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress

Jason Altmire
Member of Congress

Timothy H. Bishop
Member of Congress

Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

Bart Gordon
Member of Congress

Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress

Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

Harry E. Mitchell
Member of Congress

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Fortney Pete Stark
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Betty Sutton
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Chris Van Hollen
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Don Young
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress

Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress

Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress