

## Representing Over 130,000 Researchers

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May 13, 2019

The Honorable John Boozman *Chairman* U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Brian Schatz *Ranking Member* U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Schatz,

As the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States, representing 29 societies and over 130,000 scientists and engineers, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) urges you to not adopt language included in Sec.247 of the FY2020 House VA Military Construction Appropriations bill regarding canines in biomedical research. This language would prohibit "the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to purchase, breed, transport, house, feed, maintain, dispose of, or experiment on, dogs as part of the conduct of any study including an assignment of pain category D or E, as defined by the Pain and Distress Categories of the Department of Agriculture." If passed, this language would effectively terminate important research that will benefit the veteran community.

VA research using dogs has led to numerous health advances, including the development of the cardiac pacemaker and more recently a cough stimulator, which assists veterans with spinal cord injuries to breathe without a ventilator and cough effectively, dramatically improving their quality of life. Even though the number of dogs essential to biomedical research is extremely small (0.05 percent of VA research projects utilizing animals) they remain an important research model for addressing both human and animal diseases. This is particularly true for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, epilepsy, narcolepsy, and vision.

This canine research policy will delay medical advances and create obstacles in the quest to improve health for veterans and all Americans. We implore you to preclude inserting such language in the FY2020 Senate VA Military Construction Appropriations bill.

Respectfully,

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James M. Musser, MD, PhD FASEB President

The American Physiological Society • American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology • American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics American Society for Investigative Pathology • American Society for Nutrition • The American Association of Immunologists • American Association of Anatomists The Protein Society • Society for Developmental Biology • American Peptide Society • Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities The American Society for Bone and Mineral Research • American Society for Clinical Investigation • Society for the Study of Reproduction • The Teratology Society The Endocrine Society • The American Society of Human Genetics • American College of Sports Medicine Biomedical Engineering Society • Genetics Society of America • The Histochemical Society • Society for Pediatric Research • Society for Glycobiology Association for Molecular Pathology • Society for Redox Biology and Medicine • Society For Experimental Biology and Medicine American Aging Association • U.S. Human Proteome Organization • Society of Toxicology