



Infectious Diseases Society of America



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August 29, 2017

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The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators McCain and Reed:

We are writing on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) to express our opposition to provisions in S. 1519, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 that would impose severe restrictions on medical research funded through the Department of Defense (DoD) and impose onerous requirements on research grant recipients. We believe that these provisions of S. 1519, if enacted, would dramatically curtail infectious diseases research at the DoD, jeopardizing the health and the security of service members, veterans, and their families. We urge you to eliminate these provisions by accepting amendments to be offered by Senators Durbin and Cochran.

IDSA represents more than 11,000 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to research, patient care, prevention, public health and education. Within IDSA, HIVMA represents more than 5,000 researchers and clinicians on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The DoD has significant investments in infectious diseases-related research in antimicrobial resistance, HIV infection, tuberculosis, influenza and vaccine development, among other topical areas. Though infectious diseases can well compromise military readiness and missions, they may also impact the stability and the security of developing nations. The Military HIV Research Program is a vital partner with the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases in the quest to develop an effective vaccine for preventing HIV infection. Military scientists are also working on promising vaccine candidates to prevent Zika virus infection. This unique capacity by the military to conduct large scale clinical trials is an essential component for successful vaccine development. It makes Department of Defense biomedical research programs critical components of US global leadership in infectious disease diagnosis, prevention and treatment. The Defense Department's infectious diseases research portfolio protects service members overseas and the health of American civilians at home, while serving as a critical component of global security efforts.

We respectfully ask that you reconsider these provisions that would severely restrict research activities at the Department of Defense and accept the Cochran-Durbin amendment. At the very least, we ask that you allow for a full airing of the issues related to medical research, and a vote on the amendment, when S. 1519 reaches the Senate floor for consideration.

Sincerely yours,

William G. Powderly, MD, FIDSA  
President, IDSA

Wendy Armstrong, MD, FIDSA  
Chair, HIVMA