

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 12, 2026

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-146A, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McConnell and Ranking Member Coons:

For the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Department of Defense Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include \$12 million in funding for the Military Burn Research Program (MBRP) under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).

Since FY2007, Congress has included funding to support multi-center clinical trials to improve care for service members suffering from serious burn injuries during the various Middle East conflicts. The FY2026 appropriations bill continued this commitment by including funding for this competitive, peer-reviewed program. Previous funding has helped establish necessary infrastructure, education, and leadership to support rigorous multicenter clinical trials on burn outcomes at hospitals across the nation and foster important collaboration among military and civilian burn surgeons and researchers. Continued funding for military burn research is critical to ensure we are providing the best possible care to service members.

Burns are one of the most painful and devastating battlefield injuries a service member can suffer. Over 2,500 service men and women have suffered significant burn injuries since the start of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Due to improvements in combat casualty care, many of which were fostered by research such as this, 95 percent of service members survive burn injuries—many of which may have been fatal only a few years ago. Nevertheless, burn survivors cope with chronic pain, incapacitating scarring, and limitation in function and movement. Approximately 86 percent of all battlefield deaths occur within the first 30 minutes after wounding, emphasizing the importance of rapidly diagnosing and rendering appropriate initial burn medical response.

Research has made tremendous strides in improving outcomes for burn injuries. For example, completed studies have focused on maximizing function through rehabilitation; discovering effective treatments for preventing scar contracture; improving triage within the first 30 minutes to ensure survival of the injured soldier; improving methods to prevent and treat infection; defining the best use of blood transfusion in burn care; identifying the effect of combined burn and traumatic brain injury in outcomes; enhancing metabolic recovery; and

improving resuscitation techniques. Researchers have also investigated the treatment of acute lung injury due to smoke inhalation and burns. Ongoing studies across the nation are working to improve the quality of life for burn survivors through a new standard of active physical therapy and optimize battlefield wound care. Other high priority areas that require additional study include optimal pain management to avoid addiction, wound healing interventions, decreasing the incidence of life-threatening blood clots, and the use of advanced technologies including telemedicine for both evaluation of and long-term care for the acutely wounded soldier to lower costs and improve outcomes.

The impact of this program reaches far beyond the military, as findings from these studies can be directly translated to the civilian population. They are improving care and treatment for the thousands in the United States, and around the globe, who suffer acute burn injuries each year.

We understand that our nation faces difficult budget choices and that there are many priorities you must consider, but we believe the brave men and women that defend our nation deserve the best possible care we can provide—including treatment and care for burn injuries. As such, we respectfully request you to include \$12 million for the MBRP in FY2027.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and your consideration of our request.

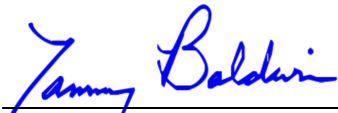
Sincerely,



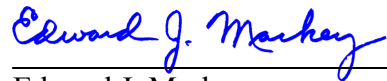
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



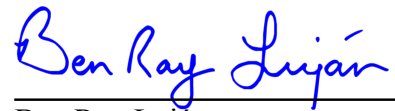
Tammy Duckworth
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Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



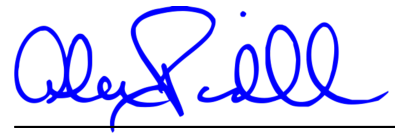
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