Dear Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world’s largest association of neurologists representing 32,000 professionals, is strongly committed to improving the care and outcomes of persons with neurologic illness. We would like to express our support for ongoing funding for the Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) at the U.S. Department of Defense.

One in six people live with a brain or nervous system condition, including Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, and headache. The annual cost of treating these disorders in the US is more than $500 billion. Ongoing research funding is essential to advance our understanding of chronic neurologic conditions in order to develop new treatments and cures.

Since 1992, CDMRP has funded $11.9 billion of important biomedical research, with millions of those dollars going to neurologic disease. For example, grants supported by the CDMRP have identified additional genetic risk factors for developing Parkinson’s disease, including two rare variants linking the risk of Parkinson’s with traumatic brain injury.

We request that any final National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Conference Report legislation excludes four provisions in the Senate-passed FY2018 NDAA (Sections 733, 891, 892, and 893) that would effectively eliminate the CDMRP, including military family and military retiree relevant medical research. None of these provisions were included in the House-passed FY2018 NDAA. It is critical to remove this language so that important research on neurologic conditions can continue.

Thank you for considering our concerns about this vital research funding. Please contact Becky Horton at 612-928-6040 if you have any questions or request additional information.

Sincerely,

Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS, FAHA, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology