

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

We respectfully request your support to provide \$15 million within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) in the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Appropriations bill to fund kidney cancer research.

We very much appreciate the Committee's past support of kidney cancer research and believe an investment through CDMRP would make a tremendous difference to millions of Americans. Due to the Committee's significant past efforts, kidney cancer was added to the Peer Reviewed Medical Research and Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Programs, and \$3.3 million in research grants have been provided through these programs since 2006. This research is making great strides in our understanding of kidney cancer. For example, past year's grants are being used to find biomarkers that can determine the risk of recurrence of kidney cancer; we are hopeful that this research will help inform treatment decisions and one day prevent the return of cancer in patients. Although this research represents important progress, it is our understanding that there have been far more applications for the research program than funding available.

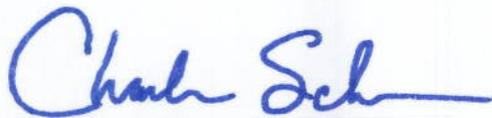
The fight to defeat kidney cancer continues. The rate of Americans developing kidney cancer has been increasing for the last 65 years. In 2010, kidney cancer led to an estimated 13,040 deaths and 58,240 new cases diagnosed, making it the eighth most common cancer in the United States. Kidney cancer has the third highest rising incidence rate of cancers overall. It is the fourth leading cancer among African American males and the fifth for Hispanic males.

In addition to the alarming increase in the patient population, mortality rates for kidney cancer patients are disturbingly high. The absence of screening techniques to provide early diagnosis, coupled with the limited treatments that are currently available, present challenges for detection and management of the disease. For example, there is only one FDA-approved drug for metastatic kidney cancer that has shown any durable response, and that for only 6 percent of patients. Unlike other types of cancer, no therapy currently exists to prevent the recurrence of kidney cancer once patients are in remission. But in recent years, targeted therapies developed for metastatic kidney cancer have gone on to be tested in other cancers; one drug first tested and approved by the FDA for kidney cancer is in clinical trials for 27 other cancers. We are encouraged by this progress and are hopeful that an investment in kidney cancer research could result in benefits for many other cancers as well.

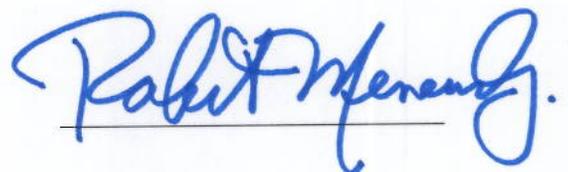
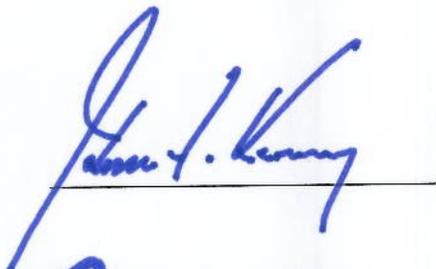
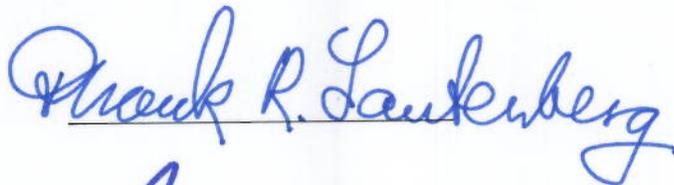
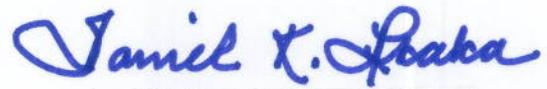
According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), kidney cancer has increased by 13 percent from 1998 through 2003. However, over the same period, the rate of usage of VA facilities by veterans diagnosed with kidney cancer increased by over 26 percent, double the amount of the general population. Given this increase in the disease burden in the U.S. veteran population, we believe it is appropriate to have the Department of Defense provide research funding necessary to develop innovative treatment options to combat this deadly disease.

The NCI estimates that billions are spent in the United States each year on treatment of kidney cancer. We, like many Americans believe it deserves dedicated research funding supported by the Department of Defense Appropriations bill. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to the day when real hope will exist for the tens of thousands of Americans who suffer from this disease. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Barbara M. Wickli

Ben Carson
