April 11, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin,

As you begin deliberations on the Fiscal Year 2020 Defense appropriations bill, we write to request your support for the creation of a Pancreatic Cancer Research Program at the Department of Defense (DoD).

Pancreatic cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths. While survival rates for many other cancers have improved, the pancreatic cancer five-year survival rate remains at nine percent. In fact, pancreatic cancer is the only major cancer in the United States with a survival rate consistently in the single digits, and is projected to become the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths around 2020.

Through your leadership in previous years, Congress has provided funding for pancreatic cancer research through the DoD’s Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). This funding has provided a small amount of support for innovative and competitive pancreatic cancer research, but there remains an urgent need to make investments that will change the outcomes for this deadly cancer. This is especially relevant to U.S. veterans, many of whom are at an increased risk of death from pancreatic cancer. Veterans often have known risk factors for pancreatic cancer, including environmental exposure, other medical conditions, like diabetes, and other lifestyle factors.

It is imperative that Congress make new investments in pancreatic cancer research. We therefore encourage you to fund research through a dedicated Pancreatic Cancer Research Program in the Fiscal Year 2020 Defense appropriations bill. Increased federal funding through a dedicated research program will provide greater opportunities to advance treatment options and improve outcomes for pancreatic cancer patients.

With your leadership and support, we can ensure that adequate resources are available to make pancreatic cancer research, early detection, and the well-being of pancreatic cancer patients a national priority. Please contact Anna Esten at anna_esten@whitehouse.senate.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator