



**SERVING
WITH
PRIDE**



A M V E T S

NATIONAL
HEADQUARTERS
4647 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland
20706-4380
TELEPHONE: 301-459-9600
FAX: 301-459-7924
E-MAIL: amvets@amvets.org

February 23, 2018

The Honorable Dave Brat
United States House of Representatives
2464 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dina Titus
United States House of Representatives
1628 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brat and Congresswoman Titus,

On behalf of American Veterans (AMVETS) and the 250,000 members we represent, we are pleased to support your efforts to phase out taxpayer funding for antiquated canine research at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In its FY19 budget request to Congress—which includes \$727 million for research - the VA writes that “VA Research continually rebalances its portfolio to meet the most significant needs of Veterans.” Where this research involves the use of canines, however, the drawbacks have far outweighed the benefits for quite some time. Evidence supports that this research has increasingly failed to deliver on the evasive “hope” that its proponents have long relied upon to justify its purpose.

For these reasons, AMVETS supports a steady and finite drawdown in funding for VA’s controversial canine research and the repurposed funds to be used for identifying alternatives to using animals in research and embracing non-animal research protocols that hold timelier promise in terms of cures and treatments, particularly in the areas of mental health, polytrauma, and the effects of toxic exposures. This change would align with the VA Secretary’s commitment to modernizing the agency and focus on managing resources more efficiently.

The change would also align with approaches taken by other government agencies, including the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health, both of which had acknowledged the overwhelming failure of expensive and time-consuming animal research to help humans. In response, these agencies have dedicated resources to the development and use of more efficient and effective research tools such as the Pentagon’s award-winning human organs-on-chips technology that obviates the need to use animals in Category D and E research.

Similarly, the VA can make better use of its limited research funding by phasing out the unproductive dog testing that AMVETS members oppose and has left wounded and disabled veterans with fading hope by failing to produce significant breakthroughs over the last few decades.

We applaud your hard work and effort to deliver greater hope to these veterans by modernizing VA research. We look forward to working with your respective offices on this issue.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH R. CHENELLY
Executive Director

cc: Sen. Johnny Isakson, Chairman, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Sen. Jon Tester, Ranking Member, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Sen. Jerry Moran, Chairman, MILCON-VA Appropriations
Subcommittee
Sen. Brian Schatz, Ranking Member, MILCON-VA Appropriations
Subcommittee
Rep. Phil Roe, Chairman, House Veterans Affairs Committee
Rep. Tim Walz, Ranking Member, House Veterans Affairs Committee
Rep. Charlie Dent, Chairman, MILCON-VA Appropriations
Subcommittee
Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, Ranking Member, MILCON-VA
Appropriations Subcommittee