



**FOVA
EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

Roscoe Butler
Paralyzed Veterans of
America

Gary Ewart
American Thoracic
Society

Joy Ilem
Disabled American
Veterans

John Laughner
American Heart
Association

Rick Starrs, MBA
National Association of
Veterans' Research and
Education Foundations

Christa Wagner, PhD
Association of American
Medical Colleges

Jennifer Zeitzer
Federation of American
Societies for
Experimental Biology

November 5, 2021

The Honorable Mark Takano
Chair
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Bost
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Takano and Ranking Member Bost:

As members of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) executive committee, we write to thank you for your legislation, the VA Infrastructure Powers Exceptional Research Act of 2021, or VIPER Act. The organizations represented by the FOVA executive committee are pleased to endorse this bill, which would provide added authority and resources to improve the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program.

FOVA is a coalition founded over 30 years ago to ensure that America's veterans receive high-quality health care supported by veteran-centric research conducted through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program. Today, FOVA is a diverse coalition representing nearly 100 national academic, medical, and scientific societies; health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations. FOVA works in concert with the Independent Budget veterans service organizations.

We are pleased that Congress has worked over the last several years in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to support robust funding growth for VA research. Specifically, your legislation would add stability and efficiency for the VA research program by formally authorizing VA's Office of Research and Development and excluding VA research from Paperwork Reduction Act requirements, better aligning VA with other federal research agencies. We also appreciate that the VIPER Act would work to enhance the diversity of the VA research workforce, increasing scientific opportunities and leading to improved health care for veterans.

While the VIPER Act takes important steps to strengthen the research program, additional infrastructure support for information technology and physical laboratory improvements continue to be necessary to ensure that VA researchers have access to the cutting-edge technology that yields state-of-the-art research and improved health outcomes. We understand that you remain abreast of these issues, and we stand ready to support any additional efforts you may undertake to address these important research needs.

Thank you again for your efforts. We look forward to working with you to continue this important work.

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee