

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Thune, and Leader Schumer,

On behalf of orthopaedic surgeons and trainees represented by the undersigned organizations, we write to express our disappointment at the 57% cut to the Department of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRPs) included in the recently enacted continuing resolution. Specifically, we are dismayed to learn that this cut has led to the elimination of the Peer-Reviewed Orthopaedic Research Program (PRORP). We ask that Congress reverse this cut and restore the CDMRP and PRORP to full funding for FY2026.

PRORP is a competitive \$30 million grant program that funds basic and clinical research pertaining to orthopaedic combat injuries through direct grants to research institutions. It is one of the most successful CDMRPs, enrolling more than 15,000 patients in studies funded by this program to date. Results are leading to major improvements in surgeons' ability to address devastating battlefield and fitness-related injuries, including in the areas of drug and device development and clinical care practices.

Over half of all combat injuries sustained during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) involved extremity injuries and orthopaedic-specific conditions secondary to battle injury. In addition, extremity injuries accounted for the greatest proportion of medical resource utilization and caused the greatest number of disabled military personnel, accounting for 65% of total inpatient resource spending and 64% of projected disability costs. PRORP research provides short- and long-term healthcare solutions for these injured service members and veterans. The research also translates to the civilian population, advancing orthopaedic care for all patients.

Thank you for your attention to this issue of critical importance to orthopaedic surgeons and their patients, active-duty service members and veterans. We look forward to working with you on bipartisan solutions to ensure the government continues to prioritize funding for high impact, high gain medical research projects. Please feel free to contact Lori Shoaf at shoaf@aaos.org if you have any questions or if the AAOS can further serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,

American Association for Hand Surgery
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons
American Society for Surgery of the Hand Professional Organization

Arthroscopy Association of North America
Cervical Spine Research Society
Limb Lengthening and Reconstruction Society
Musculoskeletal Infection Society
Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
North American Spine Society/National Association of Spine Specialists
Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Association
Orthopaedic Research Society
Orthopaedic Trauma Association
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America
Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society
Society of Military Orthopaedic Surgeons
The American Orthopaedic Association
The Gladden Society
The Hip Society
The Knee Society