

DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH COALITION

1501 M STREET, N.W. SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

March 20, 2015

DRRC ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTS ENACTMENT OF S. 800 and H.R. 1631, COMPANION BILLS INTRODUCED BY SENATORS KIRK AND BENNET AND CONGRESSMEN LANGEVIN AND HARPER TO ENHANCE THE STATURE AND VISIBILITY OF MEDICAL REHABILITATION SCIENCE AT NIH

On March 19, 2015, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL.) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Congressmen Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Gregg Harper (R-MS) introduced “The Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act” (companion bills: S. 800 and H.R. 1631) to improve, coordinate, and enhance medical rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC) enthusiastically supports the enactment of S.800 and H.R. 1631 because the time is now to enhance the stature and visibility of medical rehabilitation research at the world’s premier medical research agency and, by so doing, send a clear and unequivocal message that rehabilitation services and devices are essential health care benefits for people with disabilities and chronic conditions.

We applaud the efforts by Senators Kirk and Bennet and Congressmen Langevin and Harper to include in the bill many of the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Medical Rehabilitation Research established by NIH in December 2012. We are particularly supportive of the provisions in the bill designed to enhance coordination within NIH and with other agencies and update and streamline rehabilitation research priorities. We also support the provisions in the bill which specify that the Research Plan must be updated every five years following a scientific conference or workshop; provide for an annual progress report; tie co-funding of medical rehabilitation research projects to the Research Plan, and include a definition of medical rehabilitation research.

We urge the Senate to enact S. 800 and the House of Representatives to enact H.R. 1631 because the companion bills send a powerful message that our Nation can and must improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and chronic conditions by enhancing medical rehabilitation research at NIH and, by so doing, improve the provision of rehabilitation services and devices.

The DRRC is a coalition of 40 national non-profit organizations committed to improving the science of rehabilitation and disability. The DRRC seeks to maximize the return on the federal investment in rehabilitation and disability research with the goal of optimizing the health and function and quality of life of persons with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions.

For additional information, contact Peter Thomas [(202) 466-6550; peter.thomas@ppsv.com].

DRRC Member Organizations

American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetists
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Psychologists and Social Workers
American Association on Health and Disability
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Foundation for the Blind
American Hospital Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Amputee Coalition of America
Arthritis Foundation
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Injury Association of America
Child Neurology Foundation
Child Neurology Society
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Federation for American Hospitals
Lakeshore Foundation
March of Dimes
Mental Health America
National Association for the Advancement Orthotics & Prosthetics
National Association of Rehabilitation Research Training Centers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations
National Council on Independent Living
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
North American Brain Injury Society
Paralyzed Veterans of America
RESNA
Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation
United Spinal Association