

AMENDMENT 3173 -- Reduces duplication and enhances transparency of Pentagon-funded research and requires such research be related to defense, protection of members of the Armed Forces, or care for wounded warriors.

This amendment would save money by reducing unnecessary duplication.

In 2010, a researcher who plagiarized a grant proposal and progress report received funding from two Department of Defense (DOD) agencies and the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the same exact project. Far from the only instance of duplication, this case exposes the overlapping and disjointed nature of federally funded research efforts.

An oversight report I released earlier this month entitled “Department of Everything,” spotlighted a number of questionable research projects that obtained funding from multiple federal agencies, including DOD. These included studies examining use on slang on Twitter, the lessons about democracy that can be learned from fish, and when is the best time to take a coffee break.¹ None of these studies appear to represent urgent national priorities deeming them worthy of receiving funding from multiple federal agencies, particularly the Department of Defense.

A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found “because multiple federal agencies fund research on topics of

¹ Science Daily, Is March Madness always the same?
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110301091115.htm>, March 7, 2011.

common interest, there is potential for unnecessary duplication.” Specifically, DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) “each lack comprehensive information on health research funded by the other agencies, which limits their ability to identify potential areas of duplication in the health research they fund,” GAO found.² As a result, the agencies “may use available funds inefficiently due to duplication of effort,”³ including “potential for unnecessary duplication.”⁴ Officials at DOD, VA, and National Institutes of Health (NIH) confirmed that “duplication may sometimes go undetected.”⁵

The scientific journal *Nature* recently noted, “in general, agencies do not cross-check federal grants against their own new awards” and “there is no way of knowing how prevalent the problem is.”⁶

Paying twice, or in some cases three or more times, for the same research is wasteful, unnecessary, and reduces the amounts available for research.

² “2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,” Government Accountability Office, Report GAO-12-342SP, February 2012, page 97; <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>.

³ “2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,” Government Accountability Office, Report GAO-12-342SP, February 2012, page 97; <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>.

⁴ “2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,” Government Accountability Office, Report GAO-12-342SP, February 2012, page 99; <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>.

⁵ “2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,” Government Accountability Office, Report GAO-12-342SP, February 2012, page 99; <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>.

⁶ Eugenie Samuel Reich, “Duplicate-grant case puts funders under pressure; Critics call for tighter checks to stop researchers being funded twice for the same work,” *Nature*, February 7, 2012; <http://www.nature.com/news/duplicate-grant-case-puts-funders-under-pressure-1.9984>.

The amendment would reduce duplication by requiring improved coordination between agencies conducting scientific research.

The GAO examined the duplication and overlap between DOD, NIH, and VA and concluded the agencies “could collaborate to allow for more efficient, comprehensive searches to identify duplication,” and provided some specific recommendations such as improving information available in their databases, noting the funding status of applications, as well as noting modifications made during the funding process.⁷

The agencies would determine how best to improve coordination and reduce duplication, taking into consideration the GAO findings and recommendations.

The amendment would reduce duplication by ensuring health care research is overseen by the appropriate medical agency.

Support for medical research is unquestionably a national priority, but the Department of Defense is not the obvious federal agency to lead studies not related to defense or combat.

Yet, over the years, billions of dollars of DOD’s budget has been carved out for non-defense related medical research already receiving the attention of other government health agencies.

⁷ “2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,” Government Accountability Office, Report GAO-12-342SP, February 2012, page 99; <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>.

The practical result is (1) fewer resources are available for DOD to address those specific health challenges facing members of the armed forces for which no other agencies are focused and (2) resources that could be invested in medical research are being wasted on inefficiency and unnecessary duplication.

The amendment would direct medical research not directly related to military service funded under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program to be reassigned to NIH or other appropriate federal agency.

The amendment does not eliminate any research but rather puts research under the most appropriate agency that possesses the expert knowledge to improve outcomes, enhance coordination and reduce duplication. For example, cancer research not related to military service would be conducted by the National Cancer Institute rather than the Pentagon.

This amendment reduces waste and increases accountability by adding transparency to Pentagon funded research.

Until recently, little attention or oversight have been given to research supported by the Pentagon.

Questions about the adequacy of selection of R&D projects arose when the family business of the then-director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) received millions of

dollars to develop a bomb detector that was less accurate than a coin flip. As a result, the DOD Inspector General has launched an extraordinary review of the selection, award, and administration of every DARPA contract and grant awarded for research and development over the past two years.⁸

Earlier this month, I released an oversight report entitled “Department of Everything,” which identified tens of billions of dollars in Pentagon spending that has little to do with defense. This included more than \$6 billion of questionable, duplicative and unnecessary research projects with little to do with defense paid for by the Pentagon. It took DOD several months to disclose the dollars amounts and justifications for supporting the research studies listed in this report– despite the fact that this financial information for unclassified research and development is required by law to be posted in an online searchable website by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.

This act, which I co-authored with then-Senator Barack Obama, requires agencies to disclose all federal funds provided to outside organizations including all grant recipients on the www.usaspending.gov website.

The amendment would require DOD to work with OMB to ensure better compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act.

⁸ “FY 2012 AUDIT PLAN: Office of the Deputy Inspector General for Auditing,” Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, page 4, October 2011; http://www.dodig.mil/Audit/audit_plan.pdf.

Additionally, the amendment would require the development of a searchable public grant award database on DOD's website. The database would provide the name and location of grant recipients, the total amount of grants, the years in which the grant was funded, and the purpose of the grant. Other scientific agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation have had such databases for years.

The amendment requires DOD funded research to be related to defense.

The members of the U.S. Armed Forces sailing the sea, flying in the sky, and serving on the front lines in foreign lands deserve the best technology to ensure success at their missions. Developing innovative technologies and unlocking scientific mysteries related to these missions are unique DOD roles. This means Pentagon research needs to be focused in those areas vital to the defenses of our nation, protecting our troops, winning wars, and caring for our wounded warriors.

The "Department of Everything" oversight report I released earlier this month spotlighted a number of projects funded by the Pentagon that have little if anything to do with defense. These included research to determine the colors of the feathers of prehistoric birds, to create a smart phone app to alert users when to take a coffee break, and to sponsor a forum entitled "Did Jesus die for Klingons too?" to discuss what conflict the discovery of extraterrestrial life would pose to Christianity.

While these may be intriguing topics to some, they do not enhance the technological superiority of our soldiers or improve the defense of our nation. Our soldiers in combat would benefit more from the development of technologies to detect and defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs)

Requiring DOD research be related to DOD's mission would better focus the Pentagon's research efforts on developing new technologies for the future force, combating terrorism and other emerging threats, and providing the best care and protection for the men and women in the armed forces.

Specifically, the amendment requires research supported by the Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) program not related to weaponry, combat systems, or improving the care of or protecting the health and well-being of members of the Armed Forces. Funding for the creation of beef jerky is prohibited.

This is necessary because the FCT has recently spent more than \$1.5 million to develop its own brand of jerky.⁹ This is a highly unusual initiative since the purpose of the FCT is "to improve the U.S.

⁹"Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 President's Budget Submission," Justification Book Volume 3, Research, Development, Test & Evaluation, Defense-Wide, Office of Secretary of Defense, volume 3, February 2012, page 724. Available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2013/budget_justification/pdfs/03_RDT_and_E/Office_Secretar_of_Defense_PB_2013_1.pdf, accessed October 13, 2012.

"Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Budget Estimates," Justification Book Volume 3, Research, Development, Test & Evaluation, Defense-Wide, Office of Secretary of Defense, Volume 3, February 2011, page 855. Available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2012/budget_justification/pdfs/03_RDT_and_E/OSD.pdf, accessed October 13, 2012.

"Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Budget Estimates," Volume 3B, Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Defense-Wide, Office of Secretary of Defense, Volume 3, February 2010, page 459. Available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/budget_justification/pdfs/03_RDT_and_E/OSD%20RDTE_PB_2011_Volume%203B.pdf, accessed October 13, 2012.

warfighter's capabilities" by testing "items and technologies of our foreign allies that have a high Technology Readiness Level (TRL)" that could satisfy "mission area shortcomings."¹⁰ One of the program's stated objectives is "eliminating unnecessary duplication."¹¹

"In the last 12 years, enhanced body armor from Germany; a mine-clearing system from Denmark; and a bunker-busting, multi-purpose rocket warhead from Norway were a few of the 105 items tested and deployed by U.S. forces that originated in the FCT program. Other examples include advances in lightweight body armor and lighter, longer-lasting rechargeable batteries," according to the U.S. Army website.¹² Now beef jerky has been added to this list.

The senior scientist working on the jerky project noted, "This is the first time FCT has funded a project that wasn't related to weaponry or combat systems."¹³

While the men and women in uniform certainly would welcome new menu options, these dollars could be better spent at this time when

¹⁰ "Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) Program," U.S. Navy website, <http://www.onr.navy.mil/Science-Technology/Directorates/Transition/Technology-Transition-Initiatives-03TTX/Foreign-Comparative-Testing-FCT.aspx>, accessed October 9, 2012.

¹¹ "Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) Program," U.S. Navy website, <http://www.onr.navy.mil/Science-Technology/Directorates/Transition/Technology-Transition-Initiatives-03TTX/Foreign-Comparative-Testing-FCT.aspx>, accessed October 9, 2012.

¹² Teel, Roger. "DOD considers foreign technologies to save dollars," U.S. Army website, June 22, 2012, http://www.army.mil/article/82386/DOD_considers_foreign_technologies_to_save_dollars/, accessed October 9, 2012.

¹³ Teel, Roger. "'Where's the beef?' -- DoD finds answers in osmotic dehydration process," U.S. Army website, September 17, 2012, http://www.army.mil/article/87419/Where_s_the_beef_DoD_finds_answers_in_osmotic_dehydration_process/, accessed October 10, 2012.

sequestration imposed by the Budget Control Act is set to cut billions of dollars from our national defense budget.

Furthermore, a number of other federal departments and programs are also involved in the jerky industry, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Secretary of Defense may waive any requirement of this amendment for national security reasons.

The Secretary of Defense may waive any requirement of this amendment for national security reasons, but must provide a justification for such a waiver to Congress.