November 10, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building
Washington, District Columbia 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building
Washington, District Columbia 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins and Vice Chair Murray,

On behalf of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munitions Coalition (USCBL-CMC) and the 18 undersigned organizations, we write to express our grave concern and strong opposition regarding the administration's decision to reprogram over 70% of the Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund allocation toward addressing "exigent energy security needs for partners." While the determination, dated September 30, 2026, includes the reprogramming of fiscal year 2026 National Security Investment Programs (FY26 NSIP) from nine sector allocations, we are particularly concerned about the harm hollowing out this Fund will have.

We urge Congress to exercise robust oversight of this reprogramming action and fully fund the Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) at no less than $12 million in the FY27 National Security, Department of State and Related Programs Appropriations bill with stronger guardrails to ensure these humanitarian funds remain dedicated to their intended purpose.

We greatly appreciate the difficult negotiations and months of work required to pass the FY26 National Security and Related Appropriations Act. For 37 years, the LWVF has served as a vital lifeline for civilians injured by anti-personnel landmines, unexploded ordnance, and other remnants of war. Established by Senator Patrick Leahy with bipartisan support, the fund has long provided specialized, long-term support for victims, including accessible and appropriate prosthetics and orthotics and physical and occupational rehabilitation services. Over the decades the small but impactful LWVF widened its work to include vocational training for victims, support for sustainable local infrastructure for persons with mobility disabilities, and for international qualification and experience standards for practitioners who provide care to war-affected persons with disabilities.

For example, the Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) project began in 2020 with funding from LWVF, with the goal of strengthening local health systems to implement innovative, comprehensive, and cost-effective rehabilitation and assistive technology interventions in Pakistan, Uganda, Burma/Myanmar, and Ukraine. In Vietnam, the Advancing Medical Care and Rehabilitation Education (ADMIRE) project ran from 2015 - 2025 to build Vietnam's rehabilitation system by strengthening capacity, introducing underdeveloped professions such as occupational therapy, and embedding digital innovations within routine health care.

The administration's rationale for reprogramming this money relies on a false choice between addressing the global energy crisis and supporting civilian survivors of conflict. Pitting energy infrastructure against the basic medical needs of survivors creates an unconscionable trade-off that damages the United States' humanitarian credibility. For civilian survivors, cutting off these resources means denying them basic dignity, mobility, and the chance to rebuild their livelihoods.

Victim assistance is not a line-item surplus, it is a moral and legal pillar of international humanitarian law built into the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas as well as decades of bipartisan political consensus on Capitol Hill. When the United States strips funding away from landmine and explosive remnants of war survivors, it abandons the most vulnerable populations caught in the crossfire of modern warfare. It also undercuts longstanding U.S. leadership on addressing the harm caused by remnants of war in regions around the world.

Congress specifically allocated these funds to uphold such moral commitments, and we urge you to exercise your committee's oversight authorities on this reprogramming action. Additionally, as Congress finalizes the FY27 Appropriation bills, we urge you to fully fund the Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund at no less than $12 million in the FY27 National Security and Related Appropriations bill and include stronger guardrails to ensure these humanitarian funds remain dedicated to their intended purpose.

We call upon members of Congress to defend a program that represents the best of American humanitarian values and ensure that those who carry the physical scars of war are not left to carry them alone.

Sincerely,

U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munitions Coalition
Amnesty International USA
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for International Policy Advocacy
FIRM - Fresno Immigrant and Refugee Ministries
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Human Rights Watch
Humanity & Inclusion
Legacies of War
MAG US
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
RootsAction
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
United Church of Christ
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions
Win Without War