



January 11, 2017

Dr. David Shulkin
Office of the President-elect
1800 F St NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Dr. Shulkin,

I write today on behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, to offer you any and all assistance in accessing the scientific resources and technological know-how that you may need as Secretary of Veterans Affairs to address the country's most pressing challenges.

As Secretary, you will be leading a Department that can benefit tremendously from the outcomes of scientific research and input from scientists and engineers across a range of fields. We encourage you to appoint leading scientists and engineers to key posts on your team to ensure you have timely scientific and technical input on the important policy decisions you will face.

The Department of Veterans Affairs faces major challenges in meeting its mission to care for our nation's courageous veterans. Advances in prosthetics and our understanding of complex mental health issues, including through research funded by the Department, have the potential to dramatically improve the quality of life for those returning from combat. Advancing treatments requires directed research in these areas, but also draws on new insights from basic research across disciplines. Materials science advances can lead to lighter weight prosthetics and better batteries; fundamental work on the human brain can lead to better brain-machine interfaces for controlling prosthetics and identify biological aspects of mental health disorders. Programs supported by careful scientific research can return significant benefits to those you will serve, and deserves robust Department support.

The AAAS counts more than 100,000 members across every science and engineering discipline. We have a suite of programs focused on areas where science intersects society – from human rights and the law to education to diplomacy, and more. We publish high-quality research in our *Science* family of journals. The U.S. scientific community and the AAAS, in particular, are American assets at your disposal.

We look forward to working with you and your team at the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that you are able to draw on high quality scientific evidence to craft policies that best serve the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rush Holt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rush D. Holt
Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science
Executive Publisher, *Science* Family of Journals

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