



August 31, 2017

The Honorable Richard Burr
U.S. Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

On behalf of the more than 115,000 PAs (physician assistants) represented by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), I am writing to express support for your amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 that would create a pilot program that creates a pathway for United States Special Operations Command (USCOM) medics to earn a PA degree.

The PA profession has a distinguished history with the United States military, and the first PA students were Navy Corpsmen who served in the Vietnam War. As our nation faces a health provider shortage and USCOM medics leaving the military may struggle to connect their military experience with civilian employment, giving medics the opportunity to earn Master's Degree credit towards a PA degree could help strengthen the healthcare provider workforce both in the military and for civilians.

As you know, PAs are nationally certified and state-licensed medical professionals who practice medicine on healthcare teams with physicians and other providers. PAs practice and prescribe medication in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, throughout the uniformed services, and facilities operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

AAPA is very pleased to support your effort to include this pilot program in the NDAA for FY 2018. For further information, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Tate Heuer, AAPA Vice President, Federal Advocacy, at 571-319-4338 or at theuer@aapa.org.

Sincerely,

L. Gail Curtis, PA-C, MPAS, DFAAPA
President and Chair of the Board