



## **U.S. Campaign Opposes the Reprogramming of Leahy War Victims Funds**

**The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munitions Coalition (USCBL-CMC) strongly condemns the Trump administration’s decision to divert critical humanitarian resources from the Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund.**

Diverting over 70% of the Leahy War Victims Fund to address an energy crisis treats assistance for survivors of violent conflict as a disposable line item in a budget, undermining decades of bipartisan commitments.

For 37 years, the Leahy War Victims Fund (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 historically 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 \$8.402 million of the \$12 million in FY26 LWVF appropriations relies on a false choice between addressing the global energy crisis and supporting civilian survivors of conflict. The energy crisis can be mitigated through renewed U.S. diplomatic efforts, energy grids can be rebuilt, and fuel supplies can be diversified through alternate appropriations. However, a child who has lost a limb to a cluster submunition or a farmer who is disabled by a landmine buried decades ago cannot wait for care and rehabilitation. 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 long standing U.S. moral leadership on addressing the harm caused by remnants of war in regions around the world.

The USCBL-CMC urges the administration to immediately reverse this short-sighted decision and restore the Leahy War Victims Fund to its full, unencumbered capacity. We call upon members of Congress to exercise robust oversight 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.

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*U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munitions Coalition (USCBL-CMC)*

*The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines is the U.S. affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize laureate together with Jody Williams. The U.S. Cluster Munition Coalition is a coalition of non-governmental organizations working to achieve a comprehensive U.S. ban on cluster munitions as well as U.S. accession to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which 124 countries have signed or ratified. The USCBL-CMC calls for sustained U.S. government financial support for clearance and assistance for victims of the weapons.*