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May 18, 2017

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft
Commandant, United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Admiral Zukunft:

I write to applaud your recent decision to temporarily suspend live-tissue training in the United States Coast Guard and explore the proven, high-tech alternatives. I believe you and your staff will reach the conclusion so many other medical professional have reached: these alternatives are a cost-effective way to provide a higher level of training.

As you know, revolutionary improvements in medical technology and training have changed the way medicine is taught. Elite medical schools in my state of Oregon and across this country have ended the practice of burning, maiming, and killing animals as part of their trauma training courses. More than 95 percent of civilian trauma programs now routinely use alternatives to live-tissue training and instead rely on simulation and technology to train their students.

It would strain credulity to believe these elite schools and programs were adopting lower standards and indeed, many of them have told my office the opposite. Modern technology and simulations can offer them an even more realistic experience, complete with physiological reactions of tending to an injured person in real life. And because human anatomy differs in significant ways from that of a goat or pig, these modern alternatives can provide anatomical correctness beyond what is capable with live-tissue training.

I strongly support your willingness to reconsider the Coast Guard's use of live-tissue training because we share the same ultimate goal: to ensure those treating our military personnel receive the best training possible. I hope at the end of your assessment, you will come to the same conclusion that I and so many others have: replacing live-tissue training with more effective alternatives is the future of military trauma training.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

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