Date

Address

Dear XXX:

NYS has a landmark Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (SCIRP) funded through a law written for this purpose that stipulates a surcharge on those convicted of moving traffic violations. This program has been highly productive, leading the nation to help establish NYS as a beacon in neuroscience research. Since 1998, SCIRP provided $70 million toward developing treatments for spinal cord injury. Then, in 2010, this money, *raised for paralysis research,* was diverted to other uses. We urge NYS government to uphold the law, and reinstate this essential funding stream to benefit patients and invest in NYS biomedical progress.

SCIRP was highly successful,accruing key advances in robotics, electrical stimulation, drugs to prevent damage and promote repair and cell therapy, making NYS a leader in the search for cures for paralysis, research that is highly applicable to other disorders and diseases of the nervous system. The SCIRP statute raised about $150 million per year for NYS and of this, just 5%, around 8.5 million, was provided annually for research, the remaining 95% was used for other state bills. Since the Paterson administration, 100% of the revenue derived from the surcharge has gone into the general fund and has been used to pay the state’s ordinary bills, and none for research. This violates the spirit of the law created for spinal cord injury relief, and the profound wishes of advocates and patients. It undercuts the decision the state and people of New York made in 1998 to make a long-term and sustained investment in advanced neuroscience research, not only toward a cure, but also toward the generation of valuable patents, leveraging of research dollars from the National Institutes of Health and private sources, and our state’s leadership in this field - an investment in jobs and prosperity that will benefit all New Yorkers.

Insert details on how the program has benefited your organization, your research or your personal story.

On behalf of all the patients, including the wounded military, who desperately need therapies for paralysis, and the researchers and clinicians who are on hand, ready to create those therapies, I urge you to correct this wrong, and ensure that SCIRP again receives $8.5 million per year to fund this critical area of research.

Yours sincerely,