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ASSEMBLY FLOOR ALERT
AB 1657 (Wieckowski) – File #56

August 23, 2012

To: Members of the California State Assembly

RE: AB 1657, as amended August 14, 2012
Position: SUPPORT

The University of California supports AB 1657 (Wieckowski), which seeks to provide funding for the spinal cord injury research program created by the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act of 1999. UC Irvine's Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Program, located at the Reeve-Irvine Research Center, has administered the research and grant program on behalf of UC since its inception in 2000.

The Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act has been of enormous importance in terms of advancing research on spinal cord injury and bringing new funding to the state from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other entities. Over its more than 10-year history, the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Program has provided a total of \$15 million (approximately \$1.5 million per year) in state-funded grants for spinal cord injury research. As of 2011, these funds have been leveraged into nearly \$64 million in new funds for spinal cord injury research being brought into the state through federal and other grant sources, which translates into new jobs for Californians. Many of these projects were successful because they were able to use the resources of the UC Irvine Roman Reed Core Laboratory, which is also funded through the program. The Core Laboratory provides a means for investigators who are new to the field of spinal cord injury research to launch novel research projects, utilize state-of-the-art equipment, and obtain training in spinal cord injury research techniques.

A recent study commissioned by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reveals that approximately 5,600,000 Americans are afflicted by some form of paralysis, and 1,275,000 individuals are living with a catastrophic spinal cord injury. Nationwide, someone suffers a traumatic spinal cord injury every 41 minutes, leading to a significant loss of earning potential and high medical costs associated with their disability. Promising research-driven therapies could greatly improve the quality of life and functional capacity of individuals with spinal cord injuries. The research funding provided through the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act helps to advance this vital research, and as such, the University supports AB 1657.

As always, the University appreciates your consideration of our views. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Angela Gilliard at (916) 445-9924.

VOTE "YES" on AB 1657