

July 14, 2006

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned organizations and institutions, representing the nation's medical schools, teaching hospitals, and scientists, thank you for your continued support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which has resulted in immense benefits for the health of the American people. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we bring to your attention an issue of particular importance that we appreciate Congress having addressed in previous appropriations. Specifically, we urge you to retain the provision to maintain the salary cap imposed on extramural NIH researchers at Level I of the Executive pay scale, which equals \$183,500 in 2006. Congress has recognized the importance of this issue by preserving the cap at Executive Level I in every appropriation since FY 2001.

A high priority for the nation's medical research effort, affirmed by the Congress, is strengthening clinical research. One of the most critical needs to accomplish this goal is the increased participation of physician-scientists. The extramural salary cap disproportionately affects physician investigators and serves as a deterrent to their recruitment into research careers. Since the Federal government imposed the salary cap on extramural researchers in 1990, medical schools and teaching hospitals have been increasingly forced to bear more of the costs of physician-scientists' (and other investigators') salaries. Additionally, this comes at a time when discretionary funds from clinical revenues and other sources traditionally available to cover these costs continue to shrink. Retaining the extramural salary cap at Executive Level I will allow our institutions to continue to attract and retain the best investigators in our research programs.

In addition, maintaining the salary cap at Executive Level I will restore a level playing field between extramural investigators and intramural NIH scientists who are eligible for Executive Level I salaries under the Senior Biomedical Research Service (SBRS).

We urge you to maintain the salary cap at the Executive Level I when you consider the FY 2007 Labor-HHS appropriation.

Sincerely,

American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Boston University School of Medicine
Bradley Hospital
Brown University
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
Cedars-Sinai Health System
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Columbia University Medical Center
Cornell University
Creighton University
Duke University Medical Center
Eastern Virginia Medical School
Iowa State University
Johns Hopkins University
Medical College of Wisconsin
The Miriam Hospital
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Mountain States Health Alliance
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC)
National Primate Research Centers
New York University School of Medicine
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine and College of Pharmacy
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Ohio State University Medical Center
Penn State Hershey Medical Center/College of Medicine
Rhode Island Hospital
Society for Academic Anesthesia Chairs
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stony Brook University
Tulane University
The University of Alabama System
University of California, San Diego
University of California, San Francisco
University of Cincinnati
University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
University of Michigan Medical School
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill School of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
University of Puerto Rico, Medical Science Campus
University of Rochester Medical Center

University of South Alabama College of Medicine
University of Southern California
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Medicine
Washington University in St. Louis
West Virginia University School of Medicine
Woodruff Health Sciences Center at Emory University