

Select Statements in Support of National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding

United States House of Representatives and United States Senate
Floor Debate on H.R. 244, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017
May 3-4, 2017

House Floor Debate

May 3, 2017

House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK-4)

“We secured the second consecutive \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, the Nation’s lead biomedical research organization and a key driver of the hope of treating new diseases, saving countless lives, and, incidentally, driving down health care costs.”

“Finally, I look at things where we find a lot of common purpose here. My friend, Mr. Dent, mentioned a number of those. Things like more money for the National Institutes of Health and the Center for Disease Control. Believe me, pandemics and bioterrorists don’t care if you are Republican or Democrat, or Liberal or Conservative. We have to maintain this effort. It is extraordinarily important.”

Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA-15)

“I also wanted to mention, too, my good friend, Chairman Cole. He led the effort, along with Senator Roy Blunt, to increase funding for medical research, critical lifesaving medical research to the National Institutes of Health by \$2 billion in this legislation, taking the funding level from \$32 billion to \$34 billion. And that is on top of what we heard in fiscal year 2016, which took us up \$2 billion, as well, from \$30 billion to \$32 billion.

“So the commitment of this side of the aisle to medical research, I think, is strong, and we are backing it up with our dollars. We had to set some priorities, and Chairman Cole did that in the Labor-Health bill. He set those priorities, and we said: This is one of them. I am proud that we as Republicans are stepping up on medical research. I am also pleased, too, that many of our Democratic friends are supporting this in this effort as well.”

Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI-4)

“[The appropriations package] also commits funding for cures research at the National Institutes of Health, including the fight against Alzheimer’s, so we can work on stopping this nefarious disease that steals golden years from our seniors.”

Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS-3)

“I want to specifically touch on the needed investments in medical research, education, and for our soldiers. It matches last year’s \$2 billion increase in research funding at the National Institutes of Health, the largest increase since 2003, renewing our commitment to science with a 13 percent increase in research funding over these last 2 years.”

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA-12):

“I served with Mrs. Lowey and others on the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee for many years. And the National Institutes of Health is this place that has the Biblical power to cure. It has scientific

opportunity. And where there is scientific opportunity, we want to place additional resources. Lives depend on it.

“So, in stark contrast to the skinny budget that came out earlier, this legislation increases funding for the National Institutes of Health by \$2 billion. And I want to say on that, as we relish that \$2 billion and what it could mean to the good health of the American people, we have to protect our investments.

As we invest in new treatments and cures, we must also ensure that all Americans have access to them.

“So many of the investments at the National Institutes of Health that we are talking about are to find cures and to find preventions. So, again, let us protect the investment that we are making. Let us elevate it with pride and say \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD-5)

“At a time when the administration is seeking massive cuts to programs that affect people’s lives, this bill is more than respectable. It is a success. In fact, in some cases, we were able to increase funding. The bill provides an additional \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health. It ensures that critical lifesaving research can continue at our Nation’s top research institution. Given that President Trump wants to cut in the 2018 budget \$6 billion, and he wanted an additional \$1.2 billion from 2017, this is a victory.”

Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI-2)

“First of all, that \$54 billion increase [to Defense spending proposed by the Administration] means you are going to have to have a lot of cuts to a lot of other areas in the budget, and let me just point a few of those out. One that means a lot to my district, and I represent the people of south central Wisconsin, but it means a lot to everyone across the country, is funding for the National Institutes of Health, NIH. That is the area where that funding goes to researchers across the country who are finding cures for diseases so that we can live longer, and better, and have healthier lives, and it is essential funding. That is so important that, in the last Congress, one of the few things we got done in a bipartisan way is, we did additional funding for the National Institutes of Health.

“Just today, in the Omnibus bill to get us through funding through September 30 of this year, we upped funding in a bipartisan way for the National Institutes of Health, because we, in a bipartisan way, value the work they do. In President Trump’s budget, there is a \$6 billion cut—almost 20 percent of that budget—that would happen, threatening all sorts of research across the country.”

Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI-02)

“Rather than slash funding as the President had requested, this compromise also adds \$2 billion in funding to the National Institutes of Health, which conducts vital research in our efforts to treat and cure catastrophic diseases and drives innovative economic development.”

Senate Floor Debate
May 4, 2017

Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee Chair Roy Blunt (R-MO)

“One of those better purposes would be an increase for the second year in a row, and the second year in the last 14 years, in health research at the National Institutes of Health. There were 12 years with no increase at all, and now, for 2 back-to-back years, we are trying to get us back to the research buying power we were at 12 years ago....

“At a time when we are looking at precision medicine, when we are looking at immunotherapy, when we no longer look at cancer as just cancer and throw everything at it we want to throw at it, in fact, we look at the individual cancer, and we are at that moment because we understand now what we didn’t understand a decade ago.

“We can look at the individual cancer and the individual patient and figure out how that patient has a unique potential to fight that cancer in their body. We looked at things that may not be required for people with cancer and other diseases, and if we can figure out which people need this procedure and which people don’t, not only do you not pay for the procedure for people who don’t need it, but also people don’t go through the physical challenge of procedures they don’t need.

“As to Alzheimer’s, one of the growing concerns in American families today— right up there now with cancer as one of the things that people worry about most as they look to the future—if we could reduce the onset of Alzheimer’s by an average of 5 years, we would be spending almost 50 percent less in 2050 than we will be otherwise. In 2050, spending of tax dollars on Alzheimer’s care will overwhelm the budget, but research commitments can do something about that.”

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)

“Another area of significance to a lot of people in my State and across the country is the increase in the funding for the National Institutes of Health. There is a \$400 million increase for Alzheimer’s research— something important to me, as I lost both of my parents who suffered from Alzheimer’s, this terrible disease. We need to find not just treatments, but we need to find a cure, and I think NIH is where we are going to find it.”

Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

“I am pleased that on a bipartisan basis we have rejected President Trump’s ill-considered proposal to slash domestic programs by \$15 billion, including deep cuts in the NIH and low income energy assistance. I am glad to see a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health. I was proud to have brought then-Vice President Biden to the University of Vermont last October to discuss his Cancer Moonshot Initiative and to see and hear how Vermonters are contributing to research to better treat—and hopefully cure—cancer. NIH funding is central to this effort.

“Last year, the NIH accounted for nearly \$40 million in research funding for the University of Vermont. Everybody, everybody— Republicans and Democrats— agree they have spent it well. This research is leading to advancements in lung disease treatments, cancers, and to more effectively using genome testing to advance the emerging and promising field of precision medicine.”

Minority Whip Richard Durbin (D-IL)

“This bill fully rejects President Trump’s proposed assault on medical research and instead includes a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, or NIH, bringing the agency’s funding level to \$34.1 billion. This 6 percent increase in NIH funding matches the steady, predictable growth called for in legislation I have introduced over the past several years, the American Cures Act.

“Thanks to the NIH, we have cut the cancer death rate by 11 percent in women and 19 percent in men. HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence. Polio and smallpox are all but eradicated in this country. We are closer than ever to developing a universal influenza vaccine, to rebuilding parts of the human heart without needing to rely on transplants, and to finding new and effective therapies to delay the onset of neurological diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

“These medical breakthroughs will not happen without sustained, robust Federal funding for medical research supported by the NIH. President Trump’s disastrous budget proposals for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 would have slashed NIH’s budget by nearly 20 percent, bringing NIH to its lowest funding level in 15 years. I am pleased that Congress came together on a bipartisan basis to protect the NIH, and I want to thank my colleague Senator Blunt, chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, for his efforts to provide this vital funding. I will be working hard to ensure that NIH gets another significant funding increase for fiscal year 2018.”