Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515  

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

As Members of Congress who value the critical role played by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in better health outcomes, job creation, education, and economic growth, we respectfully request that the NIH receives at least $32 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. We feel this amount is the minimum level of funding needed to reflect the rising costs associated with biomedical research. At a time of unprecedented scientific opportunity, it is critical that the United States make forward-thinking investments that promote medical breakthroughs as well as our international leadership in biomedical research.

Over the past decade, our nation’s investment in NIH has often fallen short of what is needed to meet our research needs. Since 2003, Congressional appropriations for our nation’s greatest research institution have stagnated and failed to keep pace with inflation. We can already see the wide-ranging impact this has had, with dramatically lower grant application success rates and less money available for new researchers seeking their first grant. Students are receiving a world-class education at American universities only to graduate and seek research positions in China, India, or other nations that emphasize investment in biomedical research.

Full funding for NIH is critical if the agency is to continue to serve as the world’s preeminent medical research institution and our best hope for finding cures, improving treatments, and gaining a better understanding of the complex causes of diseases that affect millions of Americans. The agency conducts research that is too expensive and risky for private industry to undertake alone but has led to major advancements in our understanding of rare diseases and disorders, as well as historically prevalent diseases like Alzheimer’s, cancer, and Parkinson’s.

Critical medical research at NIH is on the cutting edge inspiring American researchers and scientists into vital fields. Increased funding for the NIH would allow, for example, the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to speed up its development of cell culture-based influenza vaccines. Currently, annual influenza vaccines are developed and manufactured using a 50 year old technology involving chicken eggs. Switching to a cell culture-based process could
shave weeks off the current six to nine month production process. In addition, it would allow for the rapid adjustment to changes in the annual flu, as is happening this year, or in the event of an emergency. Cell culture-based vaccines would be available to people with egg allergies that currently are not able to receive annual flu vaccines.

In addition to bettering the lives of millions, NIH funding supports over 400,000 non-federal scientists and technical personnel at 2,500 research universities and facilities nationwide. Their work drives the demand for medical supplies and research equipment. NIH funding ripples far beyond its headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, to benefit manufacturers and suppliers in every state in America.

In light of the difficult budget decisions you face, we want to stress the importance of NIH as a job creator, driver of economic growth, and a vital tool in curbing our nation’s soaring healthcare costs. We appreciate your consideration of our request to provide at least $32 billion in funding for NIH in FY 2016. Please contact Audrey Smith (Rep. McKinley) at audrey.smith@mail.house.gov, Erica Powell (Rep. Carson) at erica.powell@mail.house.gov, Matt Weiner (Rep. Susan Davis) at matt.weiner@mail.house.gov, or Jamie Tricarico (Rep. King) at Jamie.Tricarico@mail.house.gov with any further questions.

Sincerely,

David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress

Susan Davis
Member of Congress

Andre Carson
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

Mike Fitzpatrick
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Brian Higgins
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Juan Vargas
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John P. Sarbanes
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Jared Polis
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Marcia Fudge  
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William Keating  
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