

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-146A  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you and your colleagues begin to work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 appropriations bills, we respectfully request that you maintain a strong commitment to funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education bill. In 2016 the NIH saw its largest funding increase in a decade, and in the two years since, Congress has again provided for additional funding for the NIH through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act and as a result of the bipartisan budget agreement in 2018. We commend the Appropriators for recognizing the critical role support for the NIH plays in spurring continued discoveries that will save and improve lives. We believe that it is essential to continue this federal support for medical research because of the potential health benefits for all Americans and the importance of ensuring that our Nation remains at the forefront of medical research.

The NIH is our country's premier institution for medical research, supporting research in all fifty states. It offers our best hope for treating or curing debilitating diseases like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and so many other illnesses that American families battle every day. It is through the innovative medical research supported by the NIH that we may have a chance to contain the increasing health care costs associated with the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. A large portion of the projected increase in health care expenditures in the coming decades is due to demographic changes and the escalating costs associated with many medical conditions and chronic diseases that cost the federal government and private sector billions of dollars each year.

Our investment in the NIH has yielded an unprecedented number of scientific advances that have improved health outcomes and contributed significantly to the Nation's economic growth. NIH grants fund basic medical and translational research that turns benchside findings into bedside interventions for patients. Unfortunately, America has struggled to maintain its position as the world leader in research and development, and researchers have similarly struggled to secure funding. As NIH grants get more competitive, researchers can easily spend half their careers working before receiving a grant, resulting in promising, talented young researchers being discouraged from the field of biomedical research and some investigators deciding to abandon scientific research altogether or to conduct their research outside the United States. We hope that the renewed commitment to NIH funding will help reverse these troubling trends.

We all recognize the difficult choices that need to be made with respect to the budget as we seek to reduce the deficit. As we continue to grapple with emerging threats, and if we are to continue improving the health of Americans and the quality of their lives, we must continue to invest in biomedical research that has the potential to save money in the future, improve the lives of Americans, and offer an economic return for our Nation. We urge you to consider the tremendous benefits of sustained investment in the NIH, and ask you to remember our Nation's role as a world leader in biomedical research and the impact this research has on patients as your Committee makes funding decisions for FY 2019. We also ask that you include the full allocation of funding for the NIH provided by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act. Investing in research today will yield cures and therapies for patients tomorrow.



Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Sincerely,



Richard Burr

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey

Joe Manchin III

Joe Manchin III

Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo

Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen

Christopher S. Murphy

Christopher S. Murphy

Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown

Richard J. Durbin

Richard J. Durbin

James M. Inhofe

James M. Inhofe

Mazie Hirono

Mazie Hirono

Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin

Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis

Thomas R. Carper

Thomas R. Carper

Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine

Tina Smith

Tina Smith

Heidi Heitkamp

Heidi Heitkamp

Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich

James E. Risch

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Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren

Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons

John Cornyn

John Cornyn

Brian Schatz


Brian Schatz

Tammy Duckworth

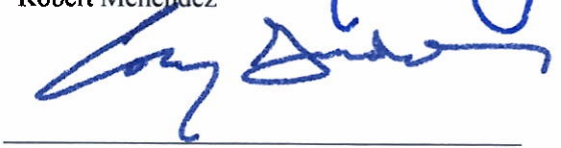
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Debbie Stabenow

  
Susan M. Collins

  
Robert Menendez

  
Jack Reed

  
Cory Gardner

  
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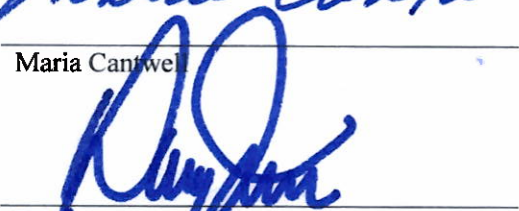
  
Jon Tester

  
David A. Perdue

  
Joe Donnelly

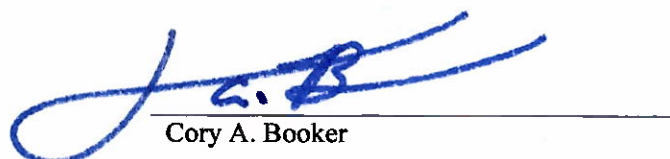
  
Maria Cantwell

  
Gary C. Peters


  
Doug Jones


  
Johnny Isakson

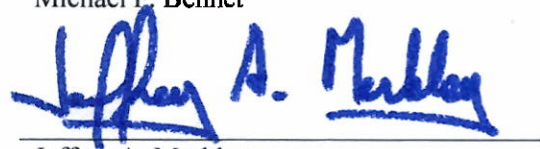
  
Kirsten Gillibrand

  
Cory A. Booker

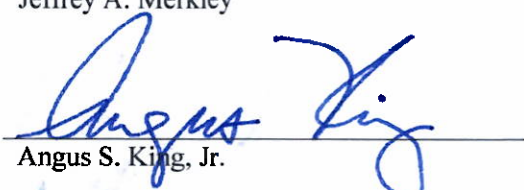
  
Mark R. Warner

  
Michael F. Bennet

  
John Hoeven

  
Jeffrey A. Merkley

  
Kamala D. Harris

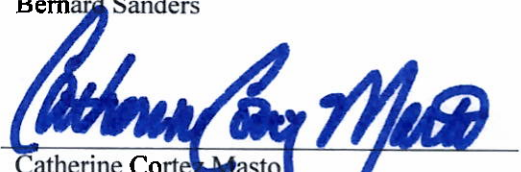
  
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Sheldon Whitehouse

  
Bill Nelson

  
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Bernard Sanders

  
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Ron Wyden

  
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