

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 21st 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 bench-side 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 21st 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

Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen

Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown

James M. Inhofe

James M. Inhofe

Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen

Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis

Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine

Heidi Heitkamp

Heidi Heitkamp

James E. Risch

James E. Risch

Chris Coons

Christopher A. Coons

Brian Schatz

Brian Schatz

Joe Manchin III

Joe Manchin III

Dianne Feinstein

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Richard J. Durbin

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Mazie Hirono

Mazie Hirono

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin

Thomas R. Carper

Thomas R. Carper

Tina Smith

Tina Smith

Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich

Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren

John Cornyn


John Cornyn


Tammy Duckworth


Tammy Duckworth


Debbie Stabenow


Susan M. Collins


Robert Menendez


Jack Reed


Cory Gardner



Margaret Wood Hassan


Amy Klobuchar


Richard Blumenthal

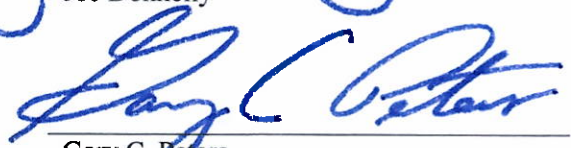

Todd Young

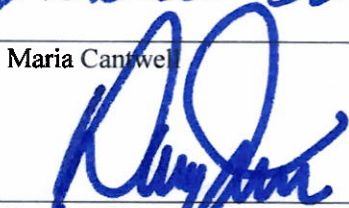

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David A. Perdue


Joe Donnelly

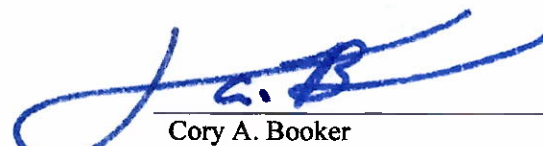

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Gary C. Peters



Doug Jones



Johnny Isakson

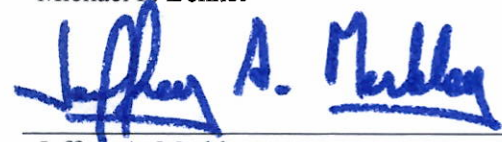

Kirsten Gillibrand


Cory A. Booker

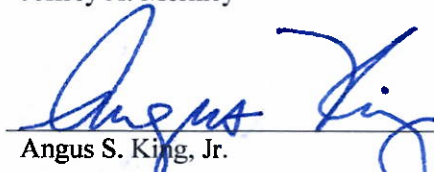

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Michael F. Bennet


John Hoeven


Jeffrey A. Merkley


Kamala D. Harris

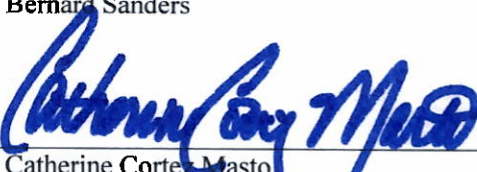

Angus S. King, Jr.


Sheldon Whitehouse

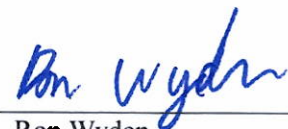

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M. Michael Rounds


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Roger F. Wicker