

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2019

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) 2020 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 three years since, Congress has provided for additional funding through the 21st Century Cures Act. In FY 2019, members from both parties agreed to further invest in biomedical breakthroughs beyond the previous year's levels. 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 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 biomedical innovation, supporting research in all fifty states. It offers our best hope for treating or curing debilitating diseases, such as 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. Projected increases in health care expenditures in the coming decades are largely due to demographic changes and the escalating costs associated with medical conditions that cost the federal government and private sector hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

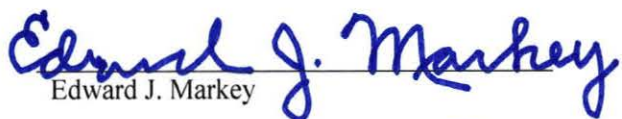
Our investment in the NIH has yielded an unprecedented number of scientific advances that have improved health outcomes and contributed significantly to the Nation's economic growth. NIH grants fund basic medical and translational research that turns bench-side findings into bedside interventions for 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 become more competitive, researchers can easily spend half their careers working before receiving a grant. Secure NIH funding allows scientists to do what they do best – discover tomorrow's therapies and cures; preventing promising, talented young researchers from leaving the field of biomedical research; and ensuring seasoned investigators do not abandon scientific research altogether or conduct their research outside the United States. We hope that the renewed commitment to NIH funding will help reverse these troubling trends.

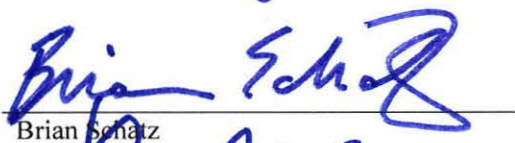
We all recognize the difficult choices that need to be made with respect to the budget as we seek to reduce the deficit. As we continue to grapple with emerging threats, and if we are to continue improving the health of Americans and the quality of their lives, we must continue to invest in biomedical research that has the potential to save money, improve lives, 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 2020. 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.

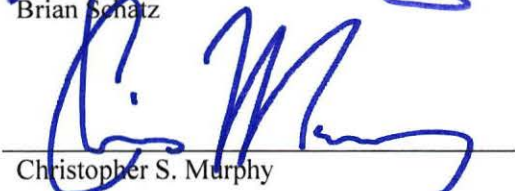

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Sincerely,


Richard Burr


Edward J. Markey

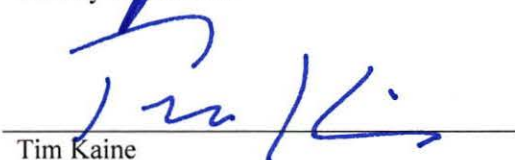

Brian Schatz

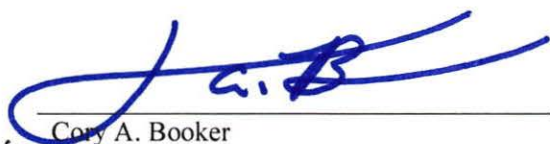

Christopher S. Murphy


Sherrod Brown

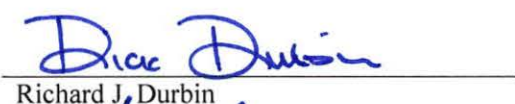

Joe Manchin III

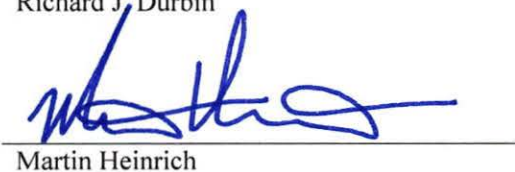

Tammy Duckworth

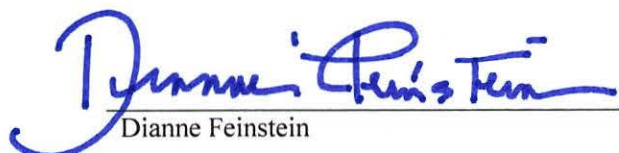

Tim Kaine

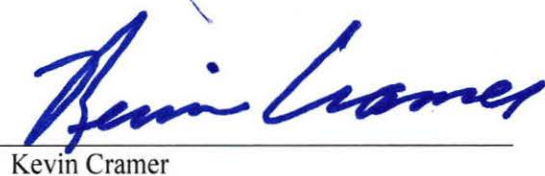

Cory A. Booker


Richard Blumenthal


Richard J. Durbin

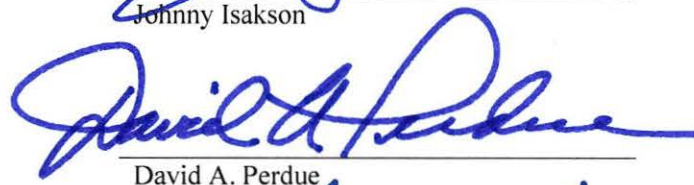

Martin Heinrich

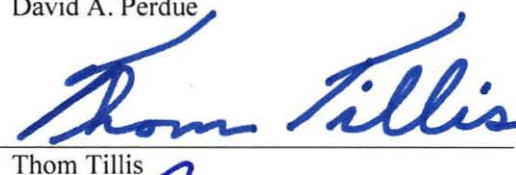

Dianne Feinstein

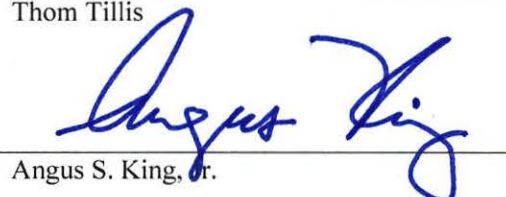

Kevin Cramer


James M. Inhofe

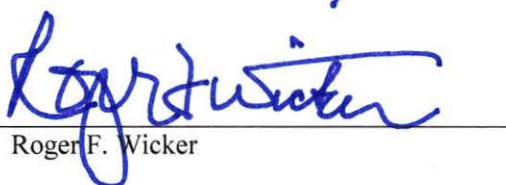

Johnny Isakson


David A. Perdue


Thom Tillis

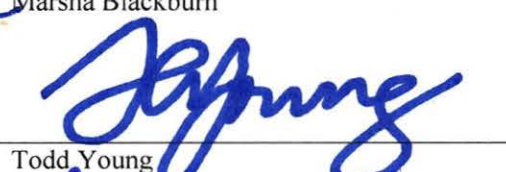

Angus S. King, Jr.

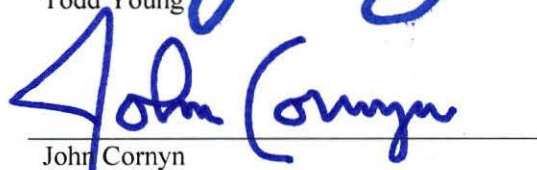

M. Michael Rounds


Roger F. Wicker


Martha McSally


Marsha Blackburn


Todd Young


John Cornyn

Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar

Sheldon Whitehouse

Sheldon Whitehouse

Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand

Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren

Doug Jones

Ron Wyden

Michael F. Bennet

Jeanne Shaheen

Catherine Cortez Masto

Gary C. Peters

Tina Smith

Cory Gardner

Cory Gardner

John Hoeven

John Hoeven

Susan M. Collins

Susan M. Collins

Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo

James E. Risch

James E. Risch

Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell

Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez

Tammy Baldwin

Mark R. Warner

Jacky Rosen

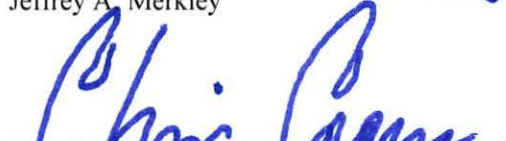
Margaret Wood Hassan

Mazie Hirono


Kyrsten Sinema


Chris Van Hollen


Jeffrey A. Merkley


Christopher A. Coons


Kamala D. Harris



Bernard Sanders



Steve Daines


Deb Fischer


Jon Tester


Thomas R. Carper


Jack Reed


Benjamin L. Cardin