

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Budget  
624 Dirksen  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Budget  
624 Dirksen  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Sessions:

As you begin the budget conference with your House counterparts, we ask that you maintain a strong commitment to funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The NIH plays an important role in advancing our understanding of human health, supporting innovation, and investing in the field of biomedical research. It is vitally important to ensure that our Nation remains at the forefront of medical research by continuing to support the NIH's work. As evidenced by the bipartisan letter to the Committee on Appropriations that we authored earlier this year, which was signed by more than half of our colleagues, there is broad support for medical research, and particularly for the NIH, in the Senate.

The NIH 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. The NIH supports research in all fifty states, through nearly 50,000 competitive grants that support hundreds of thousands of researchers across the Nation. NIH-funded research has contributed to an increase in lifespan over the last century of nearly 30 years and according to the NIH, has added an estimated \$3.2 trillion annually to the U.S. economy since 1970. Cancer deaths are falling about one percent each year, with each percentage point decline saving the U.S. approximately \$500 billion a year. According to the NIH, it is estimated that each dollar invested in the NIH generates \$2.21 in local economic growth.

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. Unfortunately, America is losing ground as the world leader in research and development and researchers are struggling 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.

If we are to improve the health of Americans and the quality of their lives, we must continue to invest in areas like biomedical research that have 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 a 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 the conference committee begins its work. Investing in research today will yield cures and therapies for patients tomorrow.



Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Sincerely,



Richard Burr