July 6, 2016

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Republican National Convention Committee on Resolutions
310 First Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Chairman Barrasso,

On behalf of Research!America, the nation’s largest nonprofit education and advocacy alliance working to accelerate medical progress and strengthen our nation’s public health system, I am writing in regard to the 2016 Republican Party Platform.

Research!America was gratified that the 2012 Republican Party Platform stressed the need for faster medical progress and highlighted the importance of research-driven innovations in health care delivery. According to public polling commissioned by Research!America, 85% of Americans think candidates for federal office should assign a high priority to increasing funding for medical research, and 81% believe Congress should support legislation encouraging private investment in medical research.

Specifically, in the section of the 2012 Republican Platform entitled “Supporting Federal Healthcare Research and Development,” the party articulates support for the research needed to achieve “greater, more cost-effective access to high quality care” and for “federal investment in basic and applied biomedical research.” In the section entitled “ Reforming the FDA” the party asserts the importance of the US life sciences industry and pledges support for policies that enable our nation to sustain global leadership in this crucial sector of our economy.

As the Platform Committee determines the tenets of the 2016 Republican Party platform, we respectfully request that you feature the need for faster medical progress even more prominently in the new platform, and also include language in support of a strong and nimble public health system. Specifically, we ask that the following basic tenets be incorporated into the Republican platform:
1) Achieving faster medical progress is an American imperative. We will do what it takes to overcome diseases that rob people we love of hope, independence, and time. We can strengthen our global leadership, grow American jobs, promote American business development, and save American lives if we make research and innovation a higher national priority.

2) To accomplish this goal—

- We will grow funding for the National Institutes of Health, fueling research and assuring today’s young scientists that they have a bright future conducting life-saving research.
- We will assure a policy environment that propels rather than holds back private sector medical innovation. We are committed to enabling the smooth functioning of the public-private pipeline and public-private partnerships.
- We will bolster funding for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. These agencies protect the public health, ensure new medical advances are safe and effective, and fix wasteful and dangerous shortcomings in our healthcare system.

Research!America firmly believes that it is in the national interest to ensure a funding and policy environment that promotes both public and private sector driven medical progress and that leverages health research to improve U.S. health care delivery. As your 2012 platform suggests, medical progress is not a function of public investment or private sector innovation; it is a function of both. Federal researchers, academic researchers and industry researchers each have a crucial role to play in propelling science forward, and federal policies should set the stage for success across all segments of the life sciences ecosystem.

And while biomedical research is a critical piece of the puzzle, advancing the health of Americans also entails supporting health services, health economics and other social sciences research to ensure our health care system is inclusive, efficient and produces high quality care. It is also crucial for our nation to maintain a rock solid, well-resourced public health system that can rapidly identify and respond to pandemics, bioterrorism and other population health threats.

We ask that you feature these priorities not only in the text of the 2016 platform, but in the preamble. It would be profoundly meaningful for the party to identify faster medical progress – with its roots in public and private sector-fueled medical innovation, a well-resourced public health system, and continuous, research-driven improvement in health care delivery – as a top strategic imperative for the U.S.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and please let me know if further information would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Mary Woolley
President and CEO