



January 17, 2018

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of Research!America, the nation’s largest not-for-profit advocacy and public education alliance committed to faster medical and public health progress, we truly appreciate your efforts to assure our nation’s discretionary budget allocates limited resources in a manner responsive to the needs and aspirations of the American people.

In that context, we hope that as you negotiate a final spending bill for fiscal year 2018 (FY18), you will provide robust increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Whether measured in quantitative or qualitative terms, the return on these assets for our health and economic security dwarfs our nation’s investment in them.

The cost of illness, both in terms of tax dollars and the havoc they wreak on the lives of patients and their loved ones, far surpasses the cost of investing in research that can prevent, treat and eradicate disease. The research NIH funds delivers health, fiscal, and economic benefits that endure and multiply; knowledge gained now becomes the foundation for further progress. To that end, we urge you to increase discretionary funding for NIH by \$2 billion in FY18, and supplement that increase by releasing the FY18 funding included in the 21st Century Cures Act to support targeted national research initiatives.

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The logic is equally compelling for funding increases that strengthen the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). These two agencies play critically important roles in protecting the nation's public health and making local, state, and national health care systems safer and more efficient.

We request that you provide at least \$7.8 billion to fund CDC in FY18. As diseases such as Ebola, Zika and Dengue fever have shown, public health threats do not respect borders, and in our increasingly globalized world, we are more vulnerable than ever to emerging infectious diseases. CDC's work is also pivotal to overcoming the opioid epidemic, which is claiming 116 American lives each day. Our nation's public health infrastructure is as important to a secure and prosperous future for our nation as the repair of our roads and bridges; reinvestment in CDC is not just desirable; it is imperative.

Our request for at least \$360 million in funding for AHRQ in FY18 is conservative relative to the potential for life-and cost-saving health services research (HSR) that our nation squanders each year by underfunding this strategically important agency. Rising health care costs place our fiscal future at risk, yet we fail to deploy health services research to remedy costly inefficiencies in our healthcare system. One example of many: AHRQ-funded research is key to addressing medical errors. The agency's efforts have produced tangible progress against these deadly errors, saving tens of millions of dollars and countless lives, but budget erosion limits the scope and reach of these efforts.

We respectfully request \$2.8 billion to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The ever-growing list of public health responsibilities FDA fulfills has far-reaching implications for the health and safety of Americans. FDA is responsible for overseeing more than \$2.4 trillion in products – which account for 20 percent of annual spending by U.S. consumers. The agency's ability to meet its responsibilities bears on our global economic competitiveness over the short- and long-term. FDA's role is simply too important, across too many American objectives, for inadequate federal support.

Finally, we request at least \$8 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF is a crucial engine for our nation's R&D leadership, funding strategically important research at more than 1,800 academic institutions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories. NSF-funded research underlies bedrock industries like IT and biopharmaceuticals, informs efforts to thwart cyber- and other forms of terrorism, and in a plethora of other ways protects and advances the nation's interests.

The noncommercial R&D that NSF, NIH and the other key federal agencies across the non-Defense and Defense realm finance, coupled with robust private-sector innovation, is a formula for advancing U.S. objectives that other nations have embraced with increasingly impressive results. In fact, as China and other competitor nations intensify their R&D investment, our nation must recommit to R&D leadership or risk flagging economic competitiveness and influence in the global arena.

The central role these agencies play in advancing the best interests of America and its citizens speaks to a larger truth: our nation's future prosperity, security and global influence hinge on a commitment to deploy research and development (R&D) and advance other key priorities and assets funded through the discretionary portion of the federal budget. As esteemed leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, you will be instrumental in determining whether, going forward, our nation reinforces or raids the discretionary budget. We urge you to protect and bolster this crucial subset of federal spending. We firmly believe that further neglect will undercut our nation's potential and jeopardize its future.

Thank you for navigating these challenging waters on the nation's behalf, and for considering Research!America's views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Woolley".

Mary Woolley
President and CEO Research!America