

May 14, 2019

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman, Homeland Security and
Government Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member, Homeland Security and
Government Affairs Committee
442 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Peters,

On behalf of Research!America and Friends of Cancer Research, we are writing to express strong concerns regarding the Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments of 2019 (H.R. 1608), which we understand is scheduled for Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee mark-up on Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

According to the bill's author, Representative Wm. Lacy Clay, H.R.1608 is grounded in the laudable goals of increasing transparency and accountability in the participant selection process and conduct of federal advisory committees. We support these objectives and appreciate the Congressman's longstanding commitment to advisory committee integrity. Unfortunately, H.R. 1608 would have unintended consequences that contravene the important goals underlying the bill and in other ways harm patients and taxpayers.

These consequences include choking off the critical "peer review" research grant evaluation process at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and compromising the ability of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to thoroughly and efficiently evaluate the safety and effectiveness of new medical treatments and technologies. Unfortunately, modifications Congressman Clay made to H.R. 1608 that attempt to remedy the bill's stultifying impact on the peer review process fail to prevent the ill effects, as explained [here](#).

Further, the dramatic and costly increase in administrative requirements associated with H.R. 1608 may significantly curtail the candidate pool for advisory committees and subcommittees, even though diversity of thought and expertise is implicit in the legislative intent of the bill and crucial for sound federal decision-making.

While we believe it would not be prudent to advance H.R. 1608 as currently drafted, we stand ready to assist in finding alternative paths that advance Congressman Clay's worthy objectives.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary Woolley
President and CEO, Research!America



Jeff Allen
President and CEO, Friends of Cancer Research

CC The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable James Lankford
The Honorable Mitt Romney
The Honorable Rick Scott
The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
The Honorable Josh Hawley
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
The Honorable Margaret Hassan
The Honorable Kamala Harris
The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
The Honorable Jacky Rosen