March 31, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and Delauro:

As Members of Congress who value the critical role played by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in achieving better health outcomes, job creation, education, and economic growth, we respectfully request an FY18 appropriation of $36 billion to reflect the rising costs of biomedical research. Therefore we respectfully request that the NIH receives an increase of at least $2 billion above Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This amount, which accounts for inflation, is the minimum level of funding needed to reflect the rising costs associated with biomedical research. At a time of unprecedented scientific opportunity, it is critical that the United States make forward-thinking investments that promote medical breakthroughs as well as our international leadership in biomedical research.

Over the past decade, our nation’s investment in NIH has often fallen short of what is needed to meet our research needs. Although a modest increase was included in the 2016 end of the year spending package, Congressional appropriations for our nation’s greatest research institution have failed to keep pace with inflation. We can already see the wide-ranging impact this has had, with dramatically lower grant application success rates and less money available for new researchers seeking their first grant. Students are receiving a world-class education at American universities only to graduate and seek research positions in China, India, or other nations that emphasize investment in biomedical research.

The 114th Congress made a down payment on continued advancements at the NIH through the passage of the 21st Century Cures law. While that funding will benefit the Precision Medicine and BRAIN initiatives as well as the Cancer Moonshot, this request for discretionary funding is necessary for the NIH to continue as the world’s preeminent medical research institution and our best hope for finding cures, improving treatments, and gaining a better understanding of the complex causes of diseases that affect millions of Americans. The agency conducts research that
is too expensive and risky for private industry to undertake alone but has led to major advancements in our understanding of rare diseases and disorders, as well as historically prevalent diseases like Alzheimer’s, cancer, and Parkinson’s.

Critical medical research at NIH is on the cutting edge inspiring American researchers and scientists into vital fields. Increased funding for the NIH would allow, for example, the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to speed up its development of cell culture-based influenza vaccines. Currently, annual influenza vaccines are developed and manufactured using a 50 year old technology involving chicken eggs. Switching to a cell culture-based process could shave weeks off the current six to nine month production process. In addition, it would allow for the rapid adjustment to changes in the annual flu, as is happening this year, or in the event of an emergency. Cell culture-based vaccines would be available to people with egg allergies that currently are not able to receive annual flu vaccines.

In addition to bettering the lives of millions, NIH funding supports over 400,000 non-federal scientists and technical personnel at 2,500 research universities and facilities nationwide. Their work drives the demand for medical supplies and research equipment. NIH funding ripples far beyond its headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, to benefit manufacturers and suppliers in every state in America.

In light of the difficult budget decisions you face, we want to stress the importance of NIH as a job creator, driver of economic growth, and a vital tool in curbing our nation’s soaring healthcare costs. We appreciate your consideration of our request to provide at least $36 billion in funding for NIH in FY 2018. Please contact Margie Almanza (Rep. McKinley) at margie.almanza@mail.house.gov, Nathan Bennett (Rep. Carson) at nathan.bennett@mail.house.gov, Matt Weiner (Rep. Susan Davis) at matt.weiner@mail.house.gov, or Jamie Matese (Rep. King) at jamiematese@mail.house.gov with any further questions.

Sincerely,

David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Susan Davis  
André Carson  
Peter T. King
Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress

Ami Bera
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Bradley C. Schneider
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress

Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.  
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress

Tom Marino  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Lujan  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

Patrick Meehan  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

Dana Rohrabacher  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velazquez  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sanchez  
Member of Congress
Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Albie Sires
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell Jr.
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress
Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop Jr.  
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

John Conyers Jr.  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress
John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress

Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III  
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Martha McSally  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

John J. Faso  
Member of Congress
Dennis A. Ross  
Member of Congress

C.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress

Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress

Peter J. Roskam  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress

Rick Allen  
Member of Congress