March 11, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, the Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As Members of Congress who value the critical role the National Institutes of Health (NIH) plays in better health outcomes, job creation, education, and economic growth, we respectfully request that the program level for the agency in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 should be at least $44.7 billion, $3 billion above the final FY20 funding level, to reflect the rising costs and increasingly interdisciplinary nature of 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.

In the last few years, medical research has led to new therapies that are transforming patient care for diseases such as sickle cell disease, cystic fibrosis, and through the use of CAR-T cells, certain types of cancer. Providing $44.7 billion for the NIH would build on the recent steady, sustained increases for the NIH since FY 2015 that have made such accomplishments possible. We are at the tip of the iceberg of new life-saving innovations. Imagine what we can accomplish with continued robust investments in medical research, from making strides to combat antimicrobial resistance, to harnessing the power of personalized medicine to treat disease, and more. The critical investments we make in biomedical research are our nation’s best hope in finding cures and treatments of diseases that affect millions of Americans. For these reasons, more than 330 organizations representing patients, scientists, health professionals, educators, institutions, and industry support this funding recommendation.

The agency conducts research that is too expensive and risky for private industry to undertake alone but has led to major achievements in our understanding of rare diseases and disorders, as well as historically prevalent diseases like Alzheimer’s, heart disease and Parkinson's. In addition to bettering the lives of millions, NIH funding supports over 300,000 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 not only as a research agency improving the health of all Americans, but also 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 $44.7 billion in funding for NIH in FY 2021.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress

Peter T. King  
Member of Congress

Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

Johanna Haynes  
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

Ntydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

Val Butler Demings  
Member of Congress

Ilario Vela  
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

David E. Price  
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Harley Rouda
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Denver Riggleman
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Ben McAdams
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Kathy M. Rice
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress
Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Arun Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Conor Lamb
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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Rob Woodall
Member of Congress

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Don Young
Member of Congress
Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Al Lawson
Member of Congress

Max Rose
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress

Daniel P. Meuser
Member of Congress

Kendra S. Horn
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress
Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Frederica S Wilson
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

John Joyce, M.D.
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Abby Finkenauer  
Member of Congress

Don Bacon  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small  
Member of Congress

Bryan Steil  
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress

Fred Keller  
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress