November 18, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

As the House continues crafting appropriations legislation before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11, 2015, we write to express our strong support for increasing the funding provided to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In any forthcoming appropriations legislation for FY 2016, we urge you to work with your colleagues in the Senate to ensure NIH receives an annual funding level of at least $32 billion, equal to the level approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee, in order to maintain America’s role as a global leader in biomedical research and ground-breaking medical discoveries.

We are concerned that, over the last 12 years, the federal government’s contributions toward basic research at NIH have consistently failed to keep pace with inflation. By failing to at least hold NIH funding constant with other rising costs, Congress has allowed the agency’s purchasing power to diminish by more than 20 percent since 2003. Indiscriminate budget cuts imposed on the agency during sequestration only further exacerbated this trend, reducing NIH’s budget by an additional 5 percent in FY 2013. As the growth in other countries’ investments in medical research continues to far outpace those made here in the U.S., it is more critical than ever that we act to reverse this trend.

Insufficient funding for NIH has a serious, wide-ranging impact on our nation’s health and our capacity for medical innovation in the 21st century. If we are serious about breaking new ground in our understanding of complex diseases like Alzheimer’s and cancer, and if we hope to accelerate the speed with which new cures, treatments and vaccines are developed, then it’s absolutely essential that we increase funding for medical research at NIH. Particularly given the significant investments in NIH approved earlier this year by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, we feel strongly that now is the time to commit to our nation’s long-term health and prosperity.

While we understand the difficult fiscal challenges you face, we urge you to prioritize the important role that NIH plays in biomedical research and economic growth by working to fund
the agency at an annual level of at least $32 billion. Thank you for your consideration of this request, which will make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of Americans.

Sincerely,

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress
Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress