

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
FOREIGN RELATIONS
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
JOINT ECONOMIC

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2012

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Director Collins:

I write today to congratulate you and the many researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), for the recent announcement detailing the breakthrough on the function of “junk” DNA in switching genes on or off. This remarkable discovery is testament to the value of sustained investment in biomedical research and the hard work of dozens of dedicated researchers, representing the best of the American biomedical research enterprise.

I urge you to move swiftly to capitalize on this important new discovery, and ask that you provide my office with additional information about how the NIH will continue to support further research into the function of “junk” DNA and how this information can be applied to new therapies. I understand that the initial research was funded out of the Common Fund’s Epigenomics program; going forward, how will additional research be funded by the NIH? Is there a clear plan at NIH on how to proceed with the next phase of research based on these new findings?

Finally, I would like to offer any assistance I or my staff can provide, and request that you keep me informed of any Congressional action that can assist in furthering this important research. I know that the biomedical research community is deeply concerned about the impact of sequestration, and I assure you that I remain committed to working with other Senators to address our Nation’s long-term fiscal health in a way that protects our investment in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-228-5098 or my Acting Legislative Assistant Sara Mabry at 202-228-2344 or sara_mabry@casey.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator