

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

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-146A  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 131  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Vice Chairman Cochran, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

As your Committee works on alternatives to sequestration, I write to respectfully request that you protect current funding level for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As evidenced by the recent discovery about the important role of "junk" DNA in switching genes on and off, federal support for basic medical research directly supports critical scientific discoveries with the potential to lead to new therapies for many diseases.

I share the concerns of the supporters of America's biomedical research enterprise, who are extremely worried about the devastating impact sequestration would have on our Nation's economy. Last week's report from the Office of Management and Budget further demonstrates the dramatic effect sequestration would have on the NIH: if sequestration is allowed to take effect, the NIH will face an immediate cut of over \$2.5 billion. This reduction is largely expected to impact the NIH's extramural budget, meaning researchers in each of our states would be less likely to receive the funding they need to proceed with their work. Existing grantees face uncertainty and the possibility that their funding will be interrupted and their research put on hold.

We all recognize the difficult choices that need to be made with respect to the budget as we seek to reduce the deficit, but it would be a detriment to medical research and the economy to allow sequestration to dictate such a dramatic cut to the NIH budget. I urge you to consider the tremendous benefits of a sustained investment in the NIH, and ask you to remember our Nation's role as a world leader in biomedical research and the impact this research has on patients as your Committee considers alternatives to sequestration.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator