



THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
IMMUNOLOGISTS

**Statement of Beth A. Garvy, Ph.D., Chair, Committee on Public Affairs
of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI),
Regarding President Donald Trump's "America First Budget" ("Skinny Budget")
March 24, 2017**

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) is deeply disappointed that the President's "America First Budget" ("skinny budget") proposes a cut of nearly 20% to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's leading funder of biomedical research. Such a cut would be unprecedented and would cause irreparable damage to, and chaos within, both NIH and the nation's extraordinary and successful biomedical research enterprise. AAI would also strongly oppose any cuts to NIH or to other federal agencies which support important scientific research or enable NIH-funded discoveries to help prevent and treat disease and disability in the United States and around the world.

Very fortunately, leading Members of Congress have already spoken forcefully and unequivocally against these proposed budget cuts. From Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI, 1st), who cited recent passage of the 21st Century Cures Act as evidence of Congress's bipartisan support "to increase spending in the NIH" (<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/324681-ryan-on-nih-budget-cuts-i-think-in-congress-youll-see-probably-some-changes>), to Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, who asserted that "[w]e are not a 'great' nation if we abandon our shared desire to cure cancer, or bring an end to Alzheimer's Disease, by slashing \$5.8 billion from the National Institutes of Health" (<https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/appropriations-committee-vice-chairman-patrick-leahy-d-vt-on-president-trumps-skinny-budget-proposal>), Members of Congress have spoken up against these proposed cuts to the research that seeks to understand, prevent, and cure disease. Other Members voicing deep concern include the following:

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ, 11th), Chair, House Appropriations Committee

"I do not support . . . the . . . cut on the . . . National Institutes of Health. The president can propose, but I think you'll find bipartisan support not only for the National Institutes of Health, but also for the Centers for Disease Control. These are good investments."

(<http://www.northjersey.com/story/news/new-jersey/2017/03/20/frelinghuysen-pans-trump-budget-cuts-not-sold-health-bill/99430086/>)

Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), Senate Democratic Leader: “[Cuts to NIH would] be a huge mistake” with “terrible” consequences for New York. “We’re one of the centers of medical research. . . . It would be drastic, and it would also hurt our standard of living. Scientific research creates lots of good-paying jobs.” (<http://www.timesunion.com/tuplus-business/article/Schumer-Trump-budget-would-be-terrible-huge-11008365.php>)

Representative Tom Cole (R-OK, 4th), Chair, House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee

“I don’t favor cutting the NIH or Centers for Disease Control. You’re much more likely to die in a pandemic than a terrorist attack, and so that’s part of the defense of the country as well. . . . So these in my view are cuts that are very short-sighted. These are investments the country ought to be making.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p7SGNTjhuk>, quoted on *Morning Joe*)

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking Member, Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

“These draconian cuts risk scientists and researchers losing tools they need to tackle some of our most pressing medical challenges . . . , [and] . . . would cripple [the] cancer ‘moonshot’ initiative & other life-saving biomedical research.”

(<https://twitter.com/PattyMurray/status/843618344741888000>;
<https://twitter.com/PattyMurray/status/842827378703257600>)

Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT, 3rd), Ranking Member, House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee

“His cut to NIH funding by approximately \$6 billion will turn back the clock on lifesaving biomedical research that has the power to change lives.” (<https://delauro.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/delauro-statement-trump-s-2018-budget>)

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chair, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

“As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee my priorities are national defense, national laboratories, the National Institutes of Health and national parks. . . . We will not balance the budget by cutting discretionary spending, which is only 31 percent of spending and is already under control because of earlier budget acts.”

(<https://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A1255C13-1E6B-44F7-A5E3-CE7D0B7687C3>)

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

“One of the most disturbing parts of the president’s budget is his slashing the funding for the National Institutes of Health. We have been making tremendous progress in increasing N.I.H.’s budget and that has helped us to develop effective treatments and new cures for very expensive diseases. If we’re serious about reducing healthcare costs, the last thing that we should be doing is cutting the budget for biomedical research.” (<http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-03-19-17-n735421>)

Representative Kevin Yoder (R-KS, 3rd)

“More than 300 members voted to boost medical research by billions in November, we cannot turn around a few short months later and slash its budget. Funding to research cures to the 10,000 known diseases in this world, like cancer, Alzheimer’s, or Parkinson's is a priority for every family in America, regardless of political party. I will fight to ensure that these proposed cuts to medical research funding never make it into law.” (<http://yoder.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/yoder-to-fight-nih-cuts-in-administration-budget-proposal>)

Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

“We are concerned that cutting almost \$6 billion dollars from the NIH budget will stymie medical innovation that cannot be duplicated by the private sector and will drive away talented scientists and researchers. Funding for NIH has enjoyed years of bipartisan support. Both Democrats and Republicans agree that slashing funding for America’s premier research institutes will hurt the agency’s ability to fund multi-year projects and retain young, talented researchers. This in turn could put the United States at a global disadvantage as other nations gain a scientific and technological edge over American innovation and medical discovery. It is in our national interest that we provide robust federal funding for NIH to ensure that our Nation remains at the forefront of global medical research.” *(from a March 17 letter to President Trump, written in response to his budget blueprint, “inviting him to visit NIH to see for himself the life-saving [work] being done in nearby Bethesda.”):*

<https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-van-hollen-invite-president-trump-to-visit-nih-urge-him-to-reverse-call-for-6b-in-cuts>)

AAI thanks these Members for their vocal opposition to these proposed cuts and thanks all Congressional champions of biomedical research for their commitment to ensuring that funding for NIH and biomedical research experiences robust growth and remains on a stable and predictable trajectory. We urge these leaders to prevent cuts to, and continue to invest in, NIH and any other federal agency whose work makes possible important scientific discovery or the application of this knowledge to benefit humanity.