

The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of
IMMUNOLOGISTS



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August 4, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) is pleased to endorse your newly-introduced legislation, S.2658, the Accelerating Biomedical Research Act. AAI greatly appreciates this legislative effort to reduce the current fiscal constraints affecting the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which we believe are seriously impeding the advancement of biomedical research and deleteriously impacting the researchers who devote their professional lives to preventing, treating, and curing disease.

As you know, S.2658 would create a budget cap adjustment over the remaining fiscal years of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) to enable the relevant Congressional appropriations committees to restore most of the purchasing power NIH has lost to inflation since 2003. The bill's \$29.9 billion trigger, after which appropriators could provide NIH with up to \$46.2 billion at the end of the period from FY 2015-2021, would allow for 10% increases in each of the first two years and 5% annual increases thereafter.

Your willingness to introduce legislation to restore needed funding to NIH and to provide it with a more predictable and sustained funding stream comes as no surprise to AAI. You have been a champion for biomedical research and NIH throughout your distinguished career, an achievement that AAI recognized in presenting you with the AAI Public Service Award in 2001. We deeply appreciate that you continue to prioritize biomedical research, and hope that you will consider working to exempt other federal scientific research programs and/or agencies from the budget caps. As you know, advances in biomedical research often depend on, or are buoyed by, discoveries in other scientific fields.

AAI thanks you for your dedication and support, and would be glad to be of any assistance that we can.

Sincerely,

Clifford V. Harding, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, AAI Committee on Public Affairs