

October XX, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

Thank you for your extraordinary efforts, and those of your dedicated staff members, to address the myriad challenges facing our nation. We write to urge you to avoid another continuing resolution (CR) by completing the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations process before the current CR expires on December 3, 2021. We appreciate that securing final appropriations legislation is a daunting task, but the consequences of failing in this task are untenable for the American people.

The dangerous impact of CRs is clear: in the science & technology realm, CRs stall progress, even though our nation cannot afford stasis. Whether the measure is the health and wellbeing of Americans and populations across the globe, U.S. economic competitiveness, or our ability to develop solutions to a host of challenges that our nation faces -- from health security to water security to energy security to national security -- our ability to advance is compromised by a budget that stalls crucial science, technology, and engineering advances and is clearly misaligned with current opportunity and need.

Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 145,000 Americans lost their lives before age 45 to physical and mental illness each year. For far too many Americans, COVID-19 is a health threat on top of other health threats that they have been battling for years and, in some cases, all of their lives. Between 25 and 30 million people in the United States,<sup>1</sup> many of them children, are living with a rare disease; nearly 17 million are battling cancer;<sup>2</sup> at least 10 million face a serious mental illness;<sup>3</sup> more than six million are struggling with Alzheimer's;<sup>4</sup> and over 34 million are living with diabetes.<sup>5</sup> That is only a small fraction of the number of people in our country living with a disease or debilitating condition.

Americans want our nation to fight back. According to a national public opinion survey Research!America commissioned just before the pandemic emerged in the U.S., 88% of

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute for Children's Health Quality. *Rare Diseases Deserve Our Attention*. Boston: National Institute for Children's Health Quality; n.d.

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society. *Cancer Treatment & Survivorship Facts & Figures 2019-2021*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2019.

<sup>3</sup> National Alliance on Mental Illness. *Mental Health Facts in America*. Arlington: National Alliance on Mental Illness; n.d.

<sup>4</sup> Alzheimer's Association. *2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures*. Chicago: Alzheimer's Association; 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2020*. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services; 2020.

Americans believe it is important for the President and Congress to assign a high priority to ensuring faster medical progress.<sup>6</sup>

The National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the National Science Foundation and the full array of R&D-critical federal agencies fuel progress that restores health, saves lives, and fosters prosperity. CRs hamstring these agencies, stalling momentum and breeding stultifying uncertainty. Further, CRs extend spending that may no longer make sense, needlessly draining dollars from taxpayer pockets. The American people deserve better.

We stand ready to support your efforts as you work to complete the FY22 appropriations process in a manner that empowers the U.S. to escalate the battle against deadly and debilitating diseases and other urgent threats that – directly and indirectly – pose a threat to us all.

Thank you for your vision and leadership.

Sincerely,

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<sup>6</sup> Research!America. *Americans' Views on Funding for Science, Medical, and Health Research*. Research!America; 2020.