

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies considers appropriations for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), we respectfully request that the Committee fund the Firefighter Cancer Registry run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the authorized level of \$2.5 million.

As you know, the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018 was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate before being signed into law by the President on July 7, 2018. This legislation directed the CDC to develop and maintain a national, voluntary registry of firefighters to track workplace information and determine the incidence of cancer. Subsequently, the Firefighter Cancer Registry was partially funded in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) after the Senate unanimously supported an amendment to H.R. 6157 the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act that directed \$1 million to the CDC to establish the Registry.

Congress intended, and stakeholders expect, that the Firefighter Cancer Registry be representative of the entire Country. Full funding for the Firefighter Cancer Registry is critical in order to create a national registry that represents the different types of firefighters across our Country, including volunteer, paid-on-call, and career firefighters. Full funding is also necessary to create the IT system that will support the registry, allow firefighters to share their data, allow researchers to access the data and, most importantly, to keep all of this personal data secure. Without full funding, the Firefighter Cancer Registry will not represent the entire country, potentially be insecure and not be able to begin enrolling firefighters over the coming fiscal year, thereby frustrating Congressional intent and failing our nation's firefighters.

According to a 2015 study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, firefighters in the United States have a greater number of cancer diagnoses and cancer-related deaths than the general population. This is especially true for digestive, oral, respiratory and urinary cancers, and malignant mesothelioma. Unfortunately, small sample sizes and a lack of important data such as other occupational information and additional risk factors have limited the exactitude of these studies.

It is critical that the CDC be able to collect the data necessary to complete more precise studies on the occupational risks of firefighters. Once completed, the registry will help researchers, stakeholders and others, advance the research into cancer risks for our nation's first responders and provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of the causal links between firefighting

and cancer. The absence of full funding for the Firefighter Cancer Registry would inhibit the CDC's data collection abilities. This could lead to unnecessary illness and death.

With this in mind, we respectfully request your support in this funding request for the full authorization level of \$2.5 million for the Firefighter Cancer Registry within the FY20 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill and thank the Committee for supporting last year's amendment during the FY19 appropriations process. Full funding will ensure we build on the good work that is occurring at the CDC and funding already spent to establish this critical public health tool.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker

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Richard Blumenthal
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Bernard Sanders
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United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



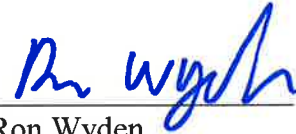
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United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
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