December 10, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
721 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

On behalf of the 27 member societies and over 120,000 researchers the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) represents, thank you for your many years of dedicated service in the Senate. You have been a tireless champion for biomedical research and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

FASEB is very grateful for the funding increases you consistently provided for the NIH during your time as the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS), and Related Agencies. Your efforts to double the NIH budget were spectacular and accelerated research that has had an extraordinary benefit for America and the world. The resources the Appropriations Committee made available to NIH enabled science to make significant advances in reducing disease and disabilities, developing new treatments, and driving innovation. As active advocates for NIH, we were especially impressed with your ability work across party lines to make funding for NIH a priority within the LHHS bill year after year.

The scientific community also owes you a debt of gratitude for your determination to obtain increased funding for NIH beginning in the early 1990’s with the proposal you and Senator Mark Hatfield co-authored to create a Biomedical Research Trust Fund. Your creative efforts to secure additional resources for NIH amid budget shortfalls and constrained funding are a testament to your unflagging advocacy for biomedical research. FASEB was pleased to endorse the Accelerating Biomedical Research Act (S. 2658) earlier this year, and we share in your disappointment that the bill was not included in the fiscal year 2015 omnibus appropriations package.

It has been our pleasure to work with you over your long and distinguished career in the Senate. We recognized you with a FASEB Public Service Award in May of 1999, but you have earned our gratitude many times over. Your leadership will be greatly missed by the research community. We wish you the best in your well-deserved retirement.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Haywood, PhD
FASEB President