February 12, 2015

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) appreciates your effort to address the funding constraints imposed on discretionary spending through the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. We are pleased to offer FASEB’s endorsement of S 289, the “American Cures Act,” which you introduced last month. By establishing a budget cap adjustment over the remaining fiscal years that the BCA is in effect, this important legislation will allow Congress to reverse the recent trend of inadequate funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Veterans Administration Medical and Prosthetic Research Program, and other agencies that support public health programs. FASEB is also grateful that the bill will create a more predictable, multi-year program of sustainable growth for NIH.

The “American Cures Act” comes at a critical time, and we share your concern about the declining percentage of U.S. spending on research and development. A new FASEB analysis of NIH data found that in 12 of the past 13 years, funding has either been cut or has failed to outpace rising costs. As a result, in constant dollars, the NIH budget remains more than 22 percent below the FY 2003 level.¹

FASEB urges that all federal research agencies be given relief from the budget caps. Scientific research is interdependent and collaborative. Biomedical researchers rely on the discoveries of other disciplines to advance their work. The current spending levels are too low to meet high priority needs of the country, including biomedical research. Thank you for continuing to ensure that our nation’s research agencies receive the level of sustained investment necessary to advance health and improve the lives of the American people.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Haywood, PhD
FASEB President

¹ NIH Research Funding Rebounds in President’s FY 2016 Budget. FASEB, February 2015.
http://www.faseb.org/Portals/2/PDFs/opa/2015/2.10.15%20NIH%20Funding%20Cuts%20Pager.pdf