

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to offer two amendments, one amendment which will add \$2.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health, and the same amendment which will increase the funding on LIHEAP. I offer this amendment on behalf of myself, Senators *Harkin, Snowe, Collins, Casey, Kennedy, Dole, Mikulski, Clinton, Levin, Sununu, Dodd, Inouye, Brown, Menendez, Stabenow, Coleman, Kerry, Durbin, Stevens, Smith, Bingaman, Cochran, Cardin, and Rockefeller.*

The funding for the National Institutes of Health is grossly insufficient. For a period of time, in the range of 1999 through 2003, funding for the National Institutes of Health has been increased very materially, with the increase on an annual basis rising as high in the year 2003 to \$3.77 billion. That increase in funding has produced remarkable results in scientific advances in many lines. The cancer rate has declined 2 percent for the last 2 years. The increase in treatment for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, autism, and heart disease, has shown remarkable achievements. And with a budget of \$3.1 trillion, I suggest it is totally insufficient to have a budget for the National Institutes of Health which would be projected at \$29.2 billion.

In 1970, President Nixon declared war on cancer, and had that war been prosecuted with the same intensity as other wars, I wouldn't have gotten Hodgkin's. My good friend, Judge Edward R. Becker, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, would not have died prematurely of prostate cancer. My Chief of Staff, Carey Lackman, a beautiful young woman of 48, would not have died from breast cancer.

On a daily basis, I have people come to see me from all over the United States who are urging increased funding on these very important lines: autism, prostate cancer, breast cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, scleroderma, and heart disease. And with the capacity in the United States to have cures for these ailments with sufficient funding, I believe this should be a much higher priority than it is at the present time. These ailments are curable.

As a footnote, one day we will recognize the availability of Federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. Embryonic stem cell research has enormous potential--enormous potential--to conquer these maladies. If these embryonic stem cells were to be used to create life, there is no doubt that would have a higher call. But there is also no doubt that with some 400,000 of these embryonic stem cells in storage, if they are not going to be used for that purpose, it is a matter of either using them or losing them.

This amendment also adds one billion to the funding for low-income energy assistance for the people who are facing enormous increases in costs. The escalating price of oil has produced a very heavy drain, especially on our senior citizens, with so many faced with the prospect of either heating or eating. So this amendment will add materially to that very important fund....

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of my prepared statements be printed in the *Record*.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *Record*, as follows:

The Lack of Funding Will Result in Lost Opportunities

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke will be unable to implement fully the planned network of 10 centers in the Special Program of Translational Research in Acute Stroke--Funding is only available for 7 centers.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development will be unable to launch a study to treat children with critical asthma.

The National Eye Institute will be unable to fund several clinical studies in minority populations, including Asian Americans and Native Americans.

The National Institute of Deafness and Communication Disorders will be unable to fund an initiative in Noise-Induced Hearing Loss.

The National Institute of Mental Health will be able to support only one clinical trial in the Bipolar Trials Network.

The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism will be unable to conduct a Phase III clinical trial in medications development. In addition, clinical trials in alcoholic liver and pancreatic diseases will go undone.

The National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Disease will eliminate a training program for pediatric diabetes researchers.

The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering will be unable to pursue opportunities in advanced imaging, which are crucial to early diagnosis and treatment.

The flat funding of NIH will affect an entire generation of young researchers. Many of this Nation's best and brightest scientists are seeking opportunities outside of the lab or in other countries because of lack of grant support.

NIH funded biomedical research has raised life expectancy, improved the quality of life, and strengthened our economy. If the United States is to continue its leadership role in providing the medical breakthroughs to treat disease, the Congress must commit to adequately supporting the funding of the National Institutes of Health.

Floor Speech--Senator Arlen Specter

NIH/LIHEAP/Mentoring Amendment to the Budget Resolution

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

The budget resolution currently recommends \$30 billion for the NIH in FY09, which is \$950 million over the FY08 appropriation. This \$2.1 billion amendment, along with the \$950 million already contained in the resolution would provide NIH with an increase of \$3 billion or 10.3 percent over the FY08 appropriation.

When I came to the Senate in 1981, NIH spending totaled \$3.6 billion. The FY 2003 omnibus appropriations bill contained \$27.2 billion for the NIH which completed the doubling begun in FY 1998. However, since the doubling took place, NIH has failed to keep pace with biomedical inflation and as a result has lost 15 percent of its purchasing power. The successes realized by this investment in NIH have spawned revolutionary advances in our knowledge and treatment for diseases such as cancer, HIV-AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, mental illnesses, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, ALS and many others. It is clear that Congress' commitment to the NIH is paying off. Now it is crucial that increased funding be continued in order to translate these advances into additional treatments and cures. Our investment has resulted in new generations of AIDS drugs which are reducing the presence of the AIDS virus in HIV infected persons to nearly undetectable levels. Death rates from cancer have begun a steady decline. Stem cell research could result in replacing diseased or damaged cells. I anxiously await the results of all of these avenues of remarkable research. This is the time to seize the scientific opportunities that lie before us.

On May 21, 1997, the Senate passed a Sense of the Senate resolution stating that funding for the NIH should be doubled over 5 years. Regrettably, even though the resolution was passed by an overwhelming vote of 98 to nothing, the Budget Resolution contained a \$100 million reduction for health programs. That prompted Senator **HARKIN** and myself to offer an amendment to the budget resolution to add \$1.1 billion to carry out the expressed sense of the Senate to increase NIH funding. Unfortunately, our amendment was tabled by a vote of 63-37. We were extremely disappointed that, while the Senate had expressed its druthers on a resolution, it was simply unwilling to put up the actual dollars to accomplish this vital goal.

The following year, Senator **HARKIN** and I again introduced an amendment to the Budget Resolution which called for a \$2 billion increase for the NIH. While we gained more support on this vote than in the previous year, our amendment was again tabled by a vote of 57-41. Not to be deterred, Senator **HARKIN** and I again went to work with our Subcommittee and we were able to add an additional \$2 billion to the NIH account for fiscal year 1999.

For fiscal year 2000, Senator **HARKIN** and I offered another amendment to the Budget Resolution to add \$1.4 billion to the health accounts, over and above the \$600 million increase which had already been provided by the Budget Committee. Despite this amendment's defeat by a vote of 47-52, we were able to provide a \$2.3 billion increase for NIH in the fiscal year 2000 appropriation's bill.

For fiscal year 2001, Senator **HARKIN** and I again offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to increase funding for health programs by \$1.6 billion. This amendment passed by a vote of 55-45. This victory brought the NIH increase to \$2.7 billion for fiscal year 2001. However, after late night conference negotiations with the House, the funding for NIH was cut by \$200 million below that amount.

For fiscal year 2002, the budget resolution once again fell short of the amount necessary to achieve the NIH doubling. Senator **HARKIN** and I, along with nine other Senators offered an amendment to add an additional \$700 million to the resolution to achieve our goal. The vote was 96-4. The Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee reported a bill recommending \$23.7 billion, an increase of \$3.4 billion over the previous year's funding. But during conference negotiations with the House, we once again fell short by \$410 million.

In order to stay on a path to double NIH, an increase of \$3.7 billion was needed in fiscal year 2003. The fiscal year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill contained the additional \$3.7 billion, which achieved the doubling effort.

For FY04, I and Senator **HARKIN** offered an amendment to add an additional \$2.8 billion to the budget resolution to ensure that the momentum achieved by the doubling could be maintained and translated into cures. The vote was 96-1. Unfortunately, the amendment was dropped in conference. We worked hard to find enough funding for a \$1 billion increase in FY04. We fought long and hard to make the doubling of funding a reality, but until treatments and cures are found for the many maladies that continue to plague our society, we must continue our fight.

For FY05, Senator **HARKIN, COLLINS** and I offered an amendment to add \$2 billion to discretionary health spending, including NIH. The amendment passed 72-24. However, the Subcommittee's allocation did not reflect this increase. The final conference agreement contained an increase of \$800 million over the FY04 funding level.

For FY06, the Senate voted 63-37 to accept the Specter/Harkin budget resolution amendment to add \$1.5 billion for NIH and \$500 million for education, but again, the funding was dropped in conference with the House. With overall funding for the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee cut \$1.9 billion below the FY05 enacted level, NIH did not receive an increase over the previous fiscal year.

For FY07, Senator **HARKIN** and I along with 28 others, offered an amendment to the budget resolution to add \$7 billion to discretionary spending for Labor, Health and Education programs offset by an increase in advance appropriations. The amendment passed 73-27. Unfortunately, the continuing resolution for FY07 did not realize the goal set by the budget amendment. The continuing resolution contained \$28.9 billion, an increase of \$636.7 million.

For FY08, once again Senator **HARKIN** and I offered an amendment, which the Senate adopted by unanimous consent, which added \$2.2 billion to NIH, CDC and Health Professions programs. However, the FY08 appropriations bill only provided increases of \$328.6 million for NIH, \$112.4 million for CDC and only \$15.5 million for health professions training over the FY07 level.

I, like millions of Americans, have benefited tremendously from the investment we have made in the National Institutes of Health and the amendment that we offer today will continue to carry forward the important research work of the world's premier medical research facility.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Paying heating and cooling bills for low-income households throughout this Nation has always been a struggle, but never more so than today with the soaring energy costs. The inability to pay for heating and cooling homes, or having to make decisions to forgo other needs such as food and medicine pose health and safety hazards--especially to the elderly, the disabled and children. This winter, Americans will spend \$977 to heat their homes which is 10 percent higher than last winter. Nationwide average oil heating bills are expected to be 22 percent higher than in the previous year. The \$1 billion amendment that I am offering today would help defray some of the costs energy costs for next year.

MENTORING

In this Nation it is estimated that more than 772,500 juveniles are members of gangs, dropouts rates in some school districts exceed 60 percent and the direct and indirect cost of youth violence exceeds \$158 billion a year. Mentoring programs have proven to steer children away from gangs violence and crime. Mentored youth are 46 percent less likely to start using drugs and alcohol, 33 percent less likely to act violently, and significantly more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college, making mentoring highly cost-effective. There are approximately 17.6 million children nationwide who need or want a mentor. Yet only three million children have been paired with a mentor--resulting in a mentoring ``gap" of approximately 14.6 million children. I am pleased to see that the resolution contains an increase of \$5.5 billion above the FY08 appropriation for education and training programs, and restores funds for the mentoring program and the 47 other education programs slated for elimination in the FY09 budget.

The increase provided for education and training programs will help address juvenile crime, violence, delinquency, and high dropout rates.

OFFSET

The \$3.1 billion amendment would be offset by an across-the-board reduction of less than 0.3 percent in Function 920--Allowances. The across-the-board reduction would not result in any program reductions, but would reduce travel and administrative expenses throughout the Federal government, including domestic agencies, homeland security, and defense.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this amendment would provide funding to continue the advances in medical research and help states assist low-income households in meeting the cost of home heating and cooling. The amendment is fully offset and does not break the cap on discretionary spending.

Mr. President, I urge adoption of this amendment.