

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

When considering the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 2019 (FY 2019), we strongly urge you to support funding for programs designed to improve minority and racial health disparities- a prevalent problem throughout our country. Not only are health disparities preventable and unjust, but they are also estimated to cost as much as \$300 billion a year. At the very least, we must continue to improve the health of our citizens by fully funding our previous FY 2018 request of \$567 million.

As our nation continues to diversify, it is important that we address the widening array of health issues associated with this changing dynamic. Across all groups, minorities are more likely to be exposed to geographical and socioeconomic factors that increase the risk of preventable, chronic disorders. For instance, African-Americans are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be diagnosed with HIV. Similarly, Hispanics are more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, and Asian-Americans suffer from higher rates of Hepatitis B. Disproportionate trends of multiple diseases and disorders are seen throughout all minority groups. We cannot allow these disparities to persist. For these reasons, we need to allot funding for specific research and care to target these population-based problems.

Ethnic and racial health disparity funding will go (1) increasing healthcare workplace diversity, (2) improving minority health research, and (3) investing in preventative health services. Therefore, we are asking for, at the minimum, \$302 million to continue to invest in National Institute of Health (NIH) research that helps establish the scientific basis for these disparities, so that they can be minimized and prevented all together. Additionally, our request for \$150 million for health education and workplace diversity programs is a proven method for producing professionals focused on improving minority health disparities. Finally, our \$115 million funding request for strategic programs and services helps prevent these disparities before they begin by funding the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) REACH program, Office of Minority Health, and the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Overall, this funding request is specific and targeted, which will allow it to be quickly implemented to its fullest extent by

reputable health organizations, such as the CDC and NIH. A full breakdown of our request is as follows:

- Strong funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) including \$302 million for the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities;
- \$25 million for the Minority Centers of Excellence program at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA);
- \$20 million for the Health Careers Opportunity Program at HRSA;
- \$40 million for the Area Health Education Centers program at HRSA;
- \$65 million for Strengthening Historically Black Graduate Institutions (HBGI) program at the Department of Education;
- \$50 million for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- \$65 million for the Office of Minority Health at the Department of Health & Human Services; and
- Ensuring that funding of the Public Health and Prevention Fund is used for programs it was intended to assist, such as cardiovascular/stroke prevention through Million Hearts

In order to best improve the health of all of our citizens, we need to invest in programs that address minority and racial health disparities. We hope you join us in addressing these harmful disparities so we can stop America's harmful health gap from widening further.

Sincerely,



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



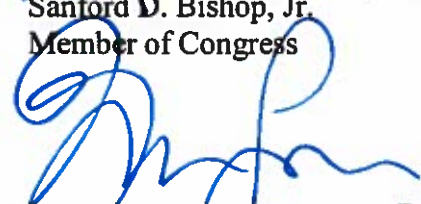
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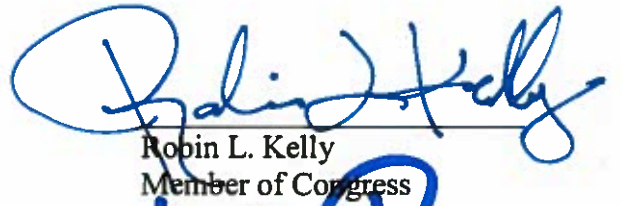


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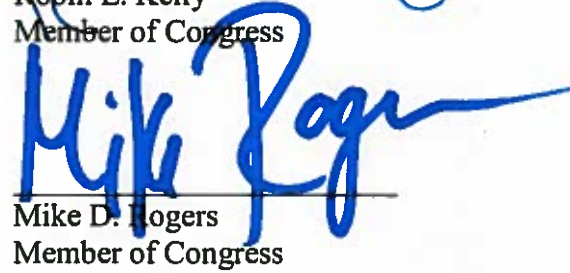
  
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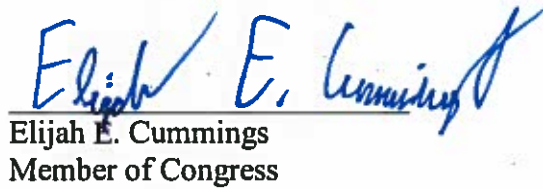
  
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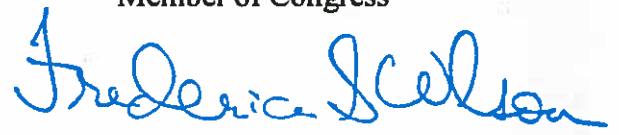
  
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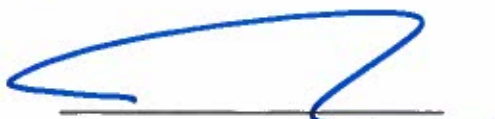
  
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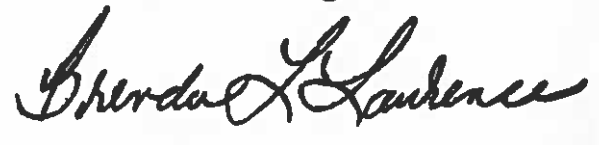
  
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