



For Immediate Release

Contact: Christina Angarola

(312) 353-4623 office

(312) 848-4484 cell

Christina_Angarola@durbin.senate.gov

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**Durbin Announces Progress Towards Restoring U.S. Commitment
to Scientific and Biomedical Research**

Cures Act Sets Standard for Increased Biomedical Research Funding in Omnibus

SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today announced major progress towards his goal of restoring the United States' commitment to breakthrough scientific and biomedical research, reversing a troubling, decades-long downward trend in funding that has threatened America's standing as a leader in discovery and innovation and our global competitiveness. He highlighted the \$2 billion increase he was able to secure in the Omnibus Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016 for the National Institutes of Health, which was based on targeted funding levels set by his American Cures Act, as well as major increases in funding for the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Defense Health Program, and the Veterans Medical & Prosthetics Research Program.

"With the support of robust, sustained federal funding, there is no limit to what science can do to prevent, treat and cure diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's. That is why I introduced the American Cures Act—to make sure young researchers and bright scientists have the funding they need to discover the new cures that will change the world," Durbin said. "The increase in funding for breakthrough research included in the omnibus bill is a down payment on that future. If we continue making those investments, we'll see our nation's best and brightest researchers light up the scoreboard."

The Omnibus Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016 includes increases funding for cutting edge biomedical research conducted at the nation's following premier federal research agencies:

- National Institutes of Health: \$32.08 billion in funding; a 6.64% increase over FY15.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: \$7.23 billion in funding; a 4.5% increase over FY15.
- Department of Defense Health Program: \$1.93 billion in funding, included in the Omnibus by Durbin, Vice Chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, as part of the Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. This is a 7% increase over the FY15 enacted level and consistent with Durbin's American Cures Act.

Veterans Medical & Prosthetics Research Program: \$630.7 million in funding, included in the Omnibus as part of a Durbin-authored amendment to the Senate-passed Fiscal Year 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This is a 7% increase over FY15 and consistent with Durbin's American Cures Act.

In 2012, fifty-three percent of all funding for basic research came from the federal government. Yet as a percentage of the total federal budget, the federal government spends two-thirds less on research and development today than it did in 1965. At NIH – the foremost biomedical research institute in the world – the percentage of research grants that receive funding has declined almost every year for the past 10 years. The lack of funding has led to a \$1.5 trillion investment deficit and a growing number of America’s best young researchers are taking their talents to other industries – and other countries.

For several years, Durbin has championed increased investment to reverse this trend. Durbin authored The American Innovation Act and The American Cures Act to set steady growth rates in federal appropriations for biomedical and scientific research conducted at the nation’s premier federal research agencies.

The American Innovation Act would provide annual budget increases of 5 percent – over and above inflation – for cutting edge research at five important federal research agencies: The National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, the Department of Defense Science and Technology Programs, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Scientific and Technical Research, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science Directorate.

The American Cures Act would set a steady growth rate in federal appropriations for biomedical research conducted at NIH, CDC, DHP, and the Veterans Medical & Prosthetics Research Program. Each year, the bill would increase funding for each agency and program at a rate of GDP-indexed inflation plus 5 percent. This steady, long-term investment would allow the agencies to plan and manage strategic growth while maximizing efficiencies.

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine researchers were recognized by Sen. Durbin during his visit to the medical school in Springfield on January 8. Dr. Jerry Kruse, dean and provost, welcomed the guests. Sen. Durbin outlined increased biomedical research funding in the Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY 2016. Numerous SIU School of Medicine researchers receive funding from premier federal agencies named in the bill, including the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Defense. Three of the funded scientists spoke at the press conference:

- Brandon Cox, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacology, who studies hearing loss and is working on a DOD-funded project to regenerate sound-sensing cells in the inner ear.
- Cristal Hill, a doctoral candidate, who studies the interaction effects of longevity genes and environment including diet. She works under the direction of Dr. Andrezj Bartke, professor of the Dept. of Physiology and Director of Geriatric Research, and world-renowned for his research in aging.
- Donald S. Torry, Ph.D., professor and chair of Medical Microbiology, Immunology & Cell Biology. Torry has received numerous federal grants to study pregnancy complications, including preeclampsia and vascular growth in the placenta. He also is director of Basic Science Research for the Simmons Cancer Institute in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at SIU School of Medicine.

Following the conference, Sen. Durbin accompanied Andrew Wilber, Ph.D., on a tour of his laboratory. Wilber, assistant professor of medical microbiology, immunology and cell biology, studies gene therapy for severe blood disorders and cancer research, and has a current NIH grant to study the role of “killer” cells in kidney cancer.