

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-146A  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you and your colleagues prepare the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations bills, we respectfully request that you prioritize funding for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) and the BioShield Special Reserve Fund in the FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education Appropriations bill.

The Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism reported in December 2008 that, in the coming years, terrorists are more likely to obtain and use a biological weapon than a nuclear weapon, and that our government must make bioterrorism a higher priority. Yet, in 2010, the Commission issued a follow-on report card finding that “the United States is woefully behind in its capability to rapidly produce vaccines and therapeutics, essential steps for adequately responding to a biological threat, whether natural or man-made.” In response to the 2009 influenza pandemic, and following an examination of the nation’s medical countermeasure (MCM) programs, the Administration concluded in the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise Review that “our Nation must have the nimble, flexible capacity to produce MCMs rapidly in the face of any attack or threat, known or unknown, including a novel, previously unrecognized, naturally occurring emerging infectious disease.”

After 9/11, Congress established BioShield to encourage the development of countermeasures for identified chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats by providing assurances that the federal government was committed to procuring the products necessary to protect the American people. The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (P.L. 109-417) reorganized and enhanced the Department of Health and Human Services medical countermeasure research, development, and procurement activities into BARDA, to more quickly develop drugs and vaccines to protect against deadly threats such as pandemic flu and bioterrorism.

Events over the past few years, including our recent experiences with Ebola, underscore the reality that we are not yet adequately prepared to deal with potentially devastating threats to the health of all Americans. In 2013, the Senate unanimously passed and the President signed into law the bipartisan Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act (P.L. 113-5) to reauthorize and strengthen BARDA and BioShield. This bipartisan law authorized \$415 million a year for BARDA and \$2.8 billion for BioShield

over the current five year reauthorization to support BARDA and BioShield's targeted medical countermeasure missions.

We must aggressively support the development of medical countermeasures, which can take up to a decade and cost hundreds of millions of dollars. BARDA and BioShield are essential to ensure that the countermeasures necessary to respond rapidly, efficiently and effectively to threats, whether natural or man-made, are available when needed. Supporting BARDA and BioShield at their authorized levels is a matter of national security and we urge you to prioritize these programs in the FY 2016 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

  
Richard Burr

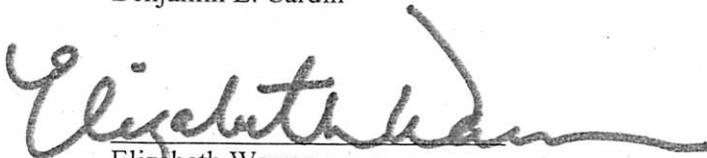
  
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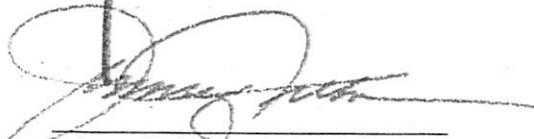
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Kirsten E. Gillibrand

  
Benjamin L. Cardin

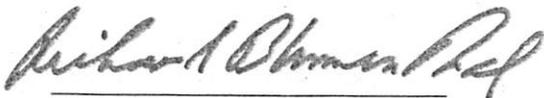


Elizabeth Warren

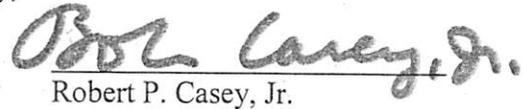


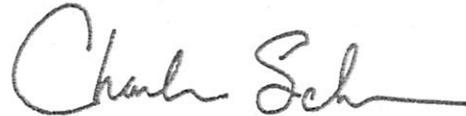
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Kelly A. Ayotte



Richard Blumenthal

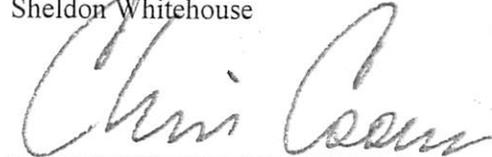
  
Robert P. Casey, Jr.



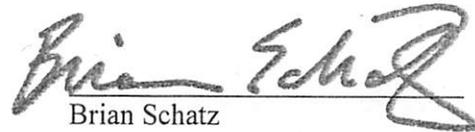
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Sheldon Whitehouse



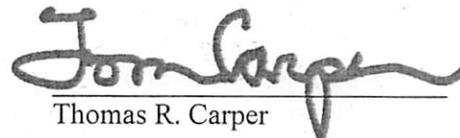
Christopher A. Coons



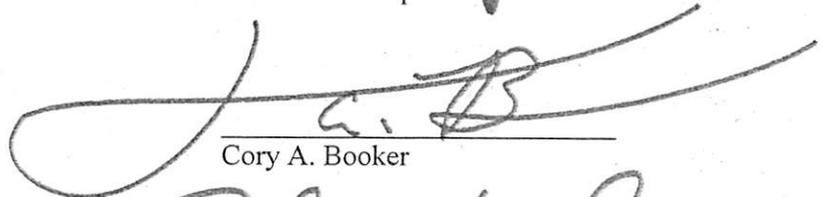
Brian Schatz



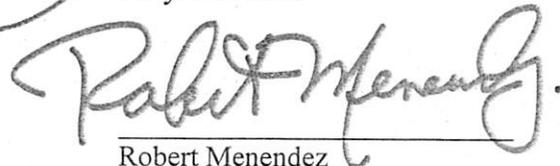
John Hoeven



Thomas R. Carper



Cory A. Booker



Robert Menendez