

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

Thank you for your leadership of the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related Agencies (L-HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee and for your commitment to enhancing public health across the United States by combating infectious diseases. While we recognize that the Subcommittee faces many difficult funding decisions again this year, we respectfully urge you to fund the domestic tuberculosis (TB) program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at \$195.7 million for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) to implement the interagency National Action Plan to Combat Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis, focus on addressing latent TB, and strengthen national, state, and local efforts to identify, treat, and prevent TB.

TB is the world's most deadly infectious disease, ranking ahead of HIV/AIDS and killing 1.7 million people annually. In the United States, TB remains a serious problem with all 50 states continuing to report cases annually. According to the CDC, there were an estimated 9,093 new cases of TB reported in the United States during 2017. In addition to these active cases, there are up to 13 million individuals in the U.S. with latent TB infection. The diagnosis and treatment of individuals with latent TB, who are at high risk of progression to active TB disease, would prevent an estimated 650,000 to 1,300,000 new cases of active TB. Furthermore, between 2005 and 2015, there were 1,195 cases of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and 31 cases of extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) reported in the United States.

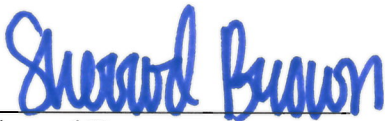
While the United States continues to make progress toward TB control, the pace of decline in new cases is too slow to achieve TB elimination in this century. New and expanded approaches in surveillance and control will be required to achieve TB elimination in the United States. Support for the CDC's Division of TB Elimination (DTBE), whose mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing, controlling, and eventually eliminating tuberculosis in the United States, is crucial for moving forward on the path to TB elimination. The DTBE has received flat funding since FY12, which has resulted in stagnant numbers of TB cases and rates in the past three years, and the rise of deadlier drug-resistant forms of TB.

In an effort to address the public health threat of drug-resistant TB, the United States launched its National Action Plan to Combat MDR-TB (National Action Plan) in December 2015. This comprehensive plan is designed to address MDR-TB in the U.S. and abroad and help accelerate

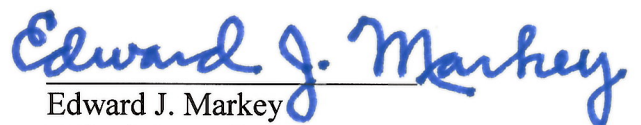
research and development for new TB diagnostics and treatments. Implementation of the National Action Plan would allow for significant progress towards the goal of TB elimination within the United States. To ensure that the National Action Plan is successful, it is imperative to adequately fund the Agencies and programs responsible for administering this plan.

We recognize your commitment to careful consideration of the many domestic, health, labor, and education programs that require assistance in FY19, and thank you for your continued leadership. We urge you to make eliminating TB in the U.S. a top priority for your FY19 appropriations bill by funding the CDC's domestic TB program at \$195.7 million in FY19 to support the full implementation of the National Action Plan, focus on addressing latent TB, and strengthen national, state and local efforts to identify, treat, and prevent TB.

Sincerely,



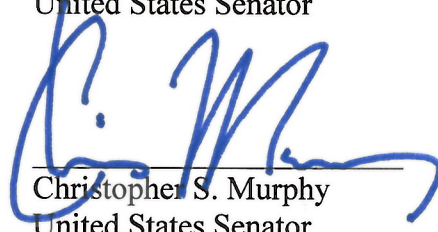
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



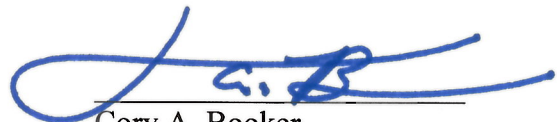
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



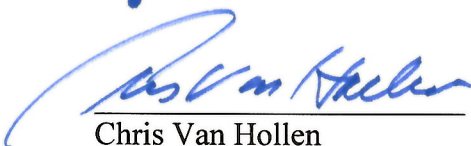
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



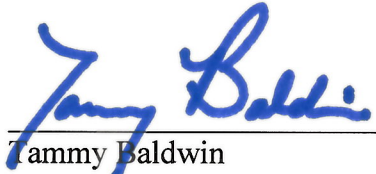
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



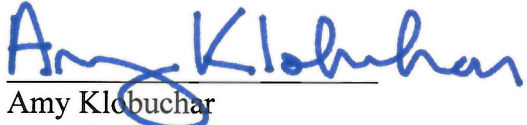
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator




Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



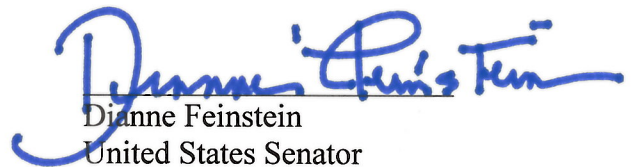
Amy Klobuchar
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United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator