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## E-NEWSLETTER

MARCH 12, 2014

## DURBIN INTRODUCES THE AMERICAN CURES ACT

*Bill Would Preserve America's Global Leadership in Innovation and Discovery by Investing in Breakthrough Biomedical Research*

[WASHINGTON, DC] With a decline in federal biomedical research threatening our standing as a leader in discovery and innovation and our global competitiveness, Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL) today introduced the *American Cures Act*, to support the future of research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Defense Health Program (DHP), and the Veterans Medical & Prosthetics Research Program.

"In the last two centuries, U.S. government support for scientific research has helped split the atom, defeat polio, conquer space, create the Internet, map the human genome, and much more. No nation has ever made such a significant investment in science, and no nation's scientists have ever done more to improve the quality of life on Earth," Durbin said. "But America's place as the world's innovation leader is at risk as we are falling behind in our investment in biomedical research."

In 2011, 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 number of research grants the agency is able to fund has declined every year for the past 10 years.

The *American Cures Act* would reverse that trend by augmenting federal appropriations for biomedical research with a mandatory trust fund dedicated to steady growth in 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.

Making a serious, sustained investment in federally funded biomedical research is especially critical as other countries around the world are placing a priority on their own research investments. Between 1999 and 2009, Asia's share of worldwide research and development expenditures grew from 24 percent to 32 percent – while American expenditures fell from 38 percent to 31 percent. In addition, the European Union has committed to a five-year plan to boost biomedical research.

Last year, Durbin, Chairman of the Senate Appropriation Subcommittee on the Defense, introduced two pieces of legislation to improve orthotics and prosthetics care for the nation's service members and veterans. The *American Cures Act* would further support the doctors and researchers at DHP and the Veterans Medical & Prosthetics Research Program who are developing state-of-the-art care for the 1,700 individuals who have suffered combat-related limb loss in Iraq and Afghanistan and the 40,000 veterans with limb loss served by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Durbin announced the legislation yesterday during a major policy address before the Center for National Policy. His remarks, as prepared, are attached.

The *American Cures Act* is co-sponsored by: U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI), U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), U.S. Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), and U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI).

The *American Cures Act* is also supported by: United for Medical Research, Research!America, AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families; American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American Association for Cancer Research; American Association of Immunologists; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.; American College of Rheumatology; American Heart Association; American Lung Association; American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association; American Society of Nephrology; American Society of Transplantation (AST); Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital; Arthritis Foundation; Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health; Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service; Debbie's Dream Foundation; Curing Stomach Cancer; Digestive Disease National Coalition; Dystonia Medical Research Foundation; Epilepsy Foundation; EVAN Foundation; Families Of Spinal Muscular Atrophy; GBS/CIDP Foundation International; Interstitial Cystitis Association; Loyola University of Chicago; Lung Cancer Alliance;

National Alopecia Areata Foundation; National Kidney Foundation; National Marfan Foundation; National Minority AIDS Council; National Rural Health Association; NephCure Foundation; Northwestern University; Pulmonary Hypertension Association; Scleroderma Foundation; Society for Public Health Education; Spina Bifida Association; The AIDS Institute; The Endocrine Society; University of Chicago; University Of Illinois; and the YMCA.

## Related Files

- [CNP Speech – Senator Durbin Final Remarks As Prepared for Delivery \(Download PDF\)](#)

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