

# Protect the National Institutes of Health:

## Oppose the NEUGEBAUER Amendment

June 22, 2005

Dear Colleague:

We ask that you join us to defend the National Institutes of Health, the foremost biomedical research institution in the world, from inappropriate and damaging political interference. **We urge you to oppose the Neugebauer amendment to Labor-HHS Appropriations, which would subvert NIH's system for funding research proposals by eliminating two specific grants.**

Congress should be proud of what NIH has accomplished on behalf of the American people. We should also respect the reason for its success: a rigorous scientific process for deciding what scientific research to fund.

The Neugebauer amendment, however, does just the opposite. It directly undermines this process by substituting the opinions of members of Congress for the scientific conclusions of experts.

One of the targeted grants, at the University of Iowa, uses an animal model to understand how the brain processes information. The results of this research will improve scientific understanding of disorders of the brain. The other targeted grant, at the State University of New York at Buffalo, will shed light on the causes of marital problems, including domestic violence.

These important grants passed NIH's rigorous peer review process. This process includes a detailed assessment by independent panels comprised of leading scientists from our nation's most prestigious universities. It also includes a second level of review by expert advisory councils with diverse representation. Interfering with this system would significantly undermine its integrity.

**The Neugebauer amendment is opposed by a broad array of research universities and scientific organizations.** Yesterday, the leaders of the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of American Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges stated:

Eliminating funding of individual NIH grants would undermine vital research as well as the best system for ensuring scientific and fiscal accountability on behalf of the American taxpayer. For our nation's public health, and for the continuing success of the U.S. biomedical research enterprise, we urge you to oppose any amendment that targets individual NIH research grants in this manner.

**We ask that you support the NIH, support our universities and medical schools, and support science. We urge you to vote against the Neugebauer amendment.**

Sincerely,

/s

Lois Capps

Member of Congress

/s

Jim Leach

Member of Congress

/s

Henry A. Waxman

Member of Congress

