

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

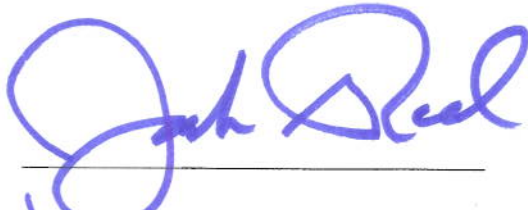
As you prepare the fiscal year (FY) 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide at least level funding for the national immunization program authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).


Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in public health and are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent disease and reduce health care costs. Due to research breakthroughs in the past two decades, for example, we can now protect our children and adolescents from 16 diseases, while in 1987 we only had vaccines for eight diseases. For each birth cohort vaccinated in accordance with the routine childhood immunization schedule, society saves \$13.6 billion in direct medical costs; 42,000 lives are saved; and 20 million cases of disease are prevented. Each dollar invested saves \$10.20.


In 2010, the CDC submitted a report to Congress concluding that the Section 317 program requires additional funding to carry out its essential public health mission of protecting Americans from preventable diseases. Indeed, the over 200 measles cases and additional outbreaks of pertussis in 2011 serve as reminders that high coverage rates must be maintained in order to keep disease rates low.

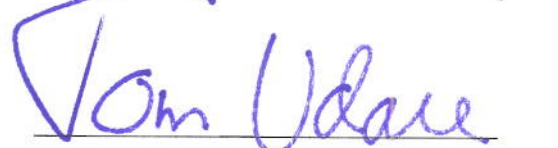
Providing at least level funding for the Section 317 program in FY 2013 would ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures to help keep Americans healthier. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,









Johnstone

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Jim Johnson

Mark

Mark R. Lauberberg

Chuck Sch

Carl Sch