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June 23, 2020

The Honorable William Cassidy
U.S. Senator
520 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Bill,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Coalition for the Life Sciences, thank you for joining us at our biannual CLS Board of Directors meeting on Friday, June 12.

The CLS is very grateful for your unwavering leadership in supporting the NIH, in its mission to advance basic research, and to foster and nurture biomedical researchers and their trainees. As we discussed, the shutdown of our research enterprise during the pandemic (except for some inspiring COVID-19 related studies) has created a crisis of still unknown dimensions, and one that will demand robust supplemental funding to enable recovery – substantially more than Francis Collins quoted in response to your question in the HELP hearing. NIH officials have acknowledged that their projection was based on flawed assumptions. Attached is our letter that provides the rationale for the \$34.5B emergency supplemental package that we consider essential for recovery.

During our meeting, one of the Nobel Laureates on our board, Bob Horvitz, shared with you his concern over the abrupt cancellation of an NIH grant focused on understanding how coronaviruses move from animals to human hosts. That grant, which included a collaboration with a leading virology lab in China, was competitively renewed just months ago with an outstanding priority score for scientific merit, then suddenly terminated without justification. We share [here](#) the letter 81 American Nobel Laureates sent to Secretary Azar and Director Collins expressing deep concern, as well a strong [endorsement](#) of that stand from CLS. We hope you may be able to inquire on the reason why this grant was terminated when the work it supports is extremely important to understanding and combatting COVID-19.

We appreciate your enthusiasm that a vaccine for COVID-19 will be available in October, but we hope that your messaging to your constituents will be one of cautious optimism. I know you understand that the development of vaccines can be challenging especially when we are dealing with a new pathogen. Traditionally, vaccine development takes many years to develop, and although many scientists and companies

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are taking multiple approaches under a compressed timeline, safety and efficacy are never assured before extensive testing.

Finally, we were pleased to hear you support for the nation's immigration policies that support and enhance the biomedical research enterprise. We are of course distressed with yesterday's executive order suspending the issuance of H-1B visas, just one more barrier discouraging brilliant foreign trainees and collaborators from contributing to the U.S. scientific enterprise.

Once again, thank you for your time and for our lively conversation, and the CLS looks forward to continuing to work with you on these issues and others as they arise.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KEITH", is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Keith R. Yamamoto, Ph.D.
Chair, Coalition for the Life Sciences
Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Strategy, UCSF
Director, UCSF Precision Medicine
Professor, Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology

Attachments: Nobel Laureate letter
CLS endorsement