

United States Senate

May 4, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

As Congress continues to work on economic stimulus legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that you address the challenges that U.S. scientific research workforce faces during this crisis. Although COVID-19-related research is now in overdrive, most other research has slowed or stopped due to closures of campuses and laboratories. We are deeply concerned that the people who comprise the research workforce — graduate students, postdocs, principal investigators, and technical support staff — face financial and other hardships from the cessation of their research activities. We therefore request funding in the next stimulus package that addresses their needs.

In the current environment, researchers face myriad problems. Many are unable to make progress on their grants. Researchers who receive federal-grant funding may continue to receive their salaries even though their research has stopped, but many need supplemental funding to support additional salary and lab supplies as they ramp up work again and for the completion of their initial grant work. Others have incurred significant costs for shutting down their labs, donating the personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline healthcare workers, and cancelling planned experiments. Many core research facilities — typically funded by user fees — sit idle. Congress must act to preserve our current scientific workforce and ensure that the U.S. is prepared to continue our global scientific leadership once this crisis ends.

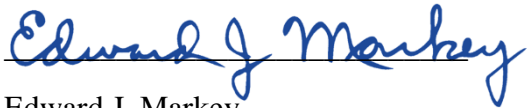
We strongly support the inclusion of \$26 billion in funding in the fourth stimulus package to:

- **Cover supplements for research grants and contracts** (i.e., cost extensions) caused by the pandemic, including additional salary support and/or research related ramp-up costs;
- **Provide emergency relief to sustain research support personnel and base operating costs for core research facilities** and user-funded research services until such time as facilities reopen and research activities return to pre-pandemic activity levels; and
- **Fund additional graduate student and postdoc fellowships, traineeships, and research assistantships** for up to two years. Graduate students who could not complete their degrees due to the pandemic should be given priority for graduate fellowships and other forms of support so they can complete their research and degrees.

Supporting the men and women of the U.S. scientific and medical research community will help stimulate the U.S economy in the near term by keeping these workers employed. Research universities, academic medical centers, and national labs are major employers in all 50 states, and protecting the research workforce is critical to state economies. In the long term, these researchers are essential to protecting our nation's public health, national security, economic growth, and international competitiveness. Preserving our scientific infrastructure will help protect our innovation pipeline and ensure U.S. leadership in the world.

We appreciate your leadership as Congress continues to respond to the economic fallout from this pandemic. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ **Sherrod Brown**
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ **Richard J. Durbin**
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/ **Jack Reed**
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ **Kamala D. Harris**
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/ **Jacky Rosen**
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ **Richard Blumenthal**
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ **Catherine Cortez Masto**
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ **Dianne Feinstein**
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ **Robert P. Casey, Jr.**
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ **Chris Van Hollen**
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ **Benjamin L. Cardin**
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ **Christopher A. Coons**
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator


/s/ **Thomas R. Carper**
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ **Ron Wyden**
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ **Gary C. Peters**
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ **Michael F. Bennett**
Michael F. Bennett
United States Senator

/s/ **Amy Klobuchar**
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ **Martin Heinrich**
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ **Tammy Duckworth**
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ **Tina Smith**
Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ **Kirsten Gillibrand**
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ **Tammy Baldwin**
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ **Tom Udall**
Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ **Elizabeth Warren**
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ **Sheldon Whitehouse**
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ **Jeffrey A. Merkley**
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ **Cory A. Booker**
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine
Tim Kaine
United States Senator