

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2018

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

As lawmakers who have led efforts to support the creation of a universal influenza vaccine, we appreciate reports that you expressed strong interest in this issue in a recent meeting with Bill Gates.¹ We urge you to support our legislation, the Flu Vaccine Act (S. 2438), which would authorize additional resources over the next five years for research to help develop a more effective, universal influenza vaccine.

Seasonal influenza is a pressing public health threat, taking a substantial toll on our families, health care system, and economy each year. This season was particularly difficult, resulting in at least 160 pediatric deaths.² Despite the damage inflicted by influenza annually, our current vaccine is only 60 percent effective at best. It is critical that we develop a more effective and longer lasting approach to preventing influenza.

In February, we introduced our legislation to invest significant additional resources in research related to the development of a universal influenza vaccine. S. 2438 would authorize \$1 billion to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the institute within the National Institutes of Health spearheading influenza research.

We also worked with our colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to secure \$100 million in funding and encourage NIAID to continue prioritizing research related to a universal influenza vaccine in the fiscal year 2018 appropriations bill you signed into law in March.

It is imperative that NIAID and our federal agencies engaged in influenza-related research possess the resources needed to increase our understanding of the pathogenesis of influenza, the immune response to both influenza infection and vaccination, and different approaches to vaccination. This is particularly crucial now that NIAID recently initiated a Phase 2 clinical trial for a potential universal influenza vaccine candidate.³

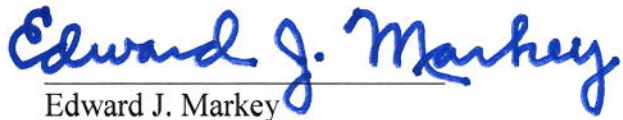
¹ Helen Branswell, *Bill Gates got President Trump fired up about a universal flu vaccine — and also (maybe) got a job offer*, Stat (April 30, 2018), <https://www.statnews.com/2018/04/30/bill-gates-vaccine-trump-meeting/>

² Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 27, 2018), <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm#S3>

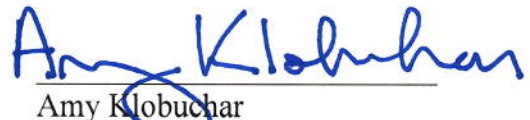
³ Universal Influenza Vaccine Research, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (May 4, 2018), <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/universal-influenza-vaccine-research>

We are committed to working with your Administration so the goal of a universal influenza vaccine becomes a reality. We look forward to working together to eliminate seasonal influenza as a public health burden once and for all.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



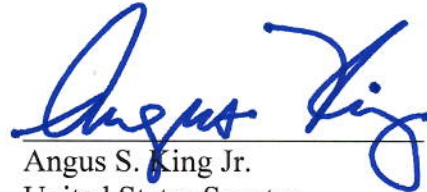
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator