

FRIENDS OF NIDA

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Executive Committee

William Dewey (Chair)
College on Problems of
Drug Dependence

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Industries Council, Inc.

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National Association of Alcohol
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Robert Morrison,
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Abuse Directors

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Charles O'Keeffe, Virginia
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Richard Rosenthal,
American Academy of Addiction
Psychiatry

Sue Thau,
Community Anti-Drug
Coalitions of America

October 27, 2005

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Specter and Senator Harkin:

Drug abuse and addiction represent a major health crisis in America, and create an economic burden of over \$484 billion per year. One way we can and should continue to address this problem is through scientific research. Because of the critical importance of drug abuse research for the health and economy of our nation, we write to you today as the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (Friends of NIDA) to request that you support the Senate number of \$29.4 billion or a 3.7% increase over Fiscal 2005 for the National Institutes of Health and support the Senate's number of \$1,035,167,000 for the National Institutes on Drug Abuse in Conference on the Fiscal 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies bill.

NIDA is the world's largest supporter of research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute supports a comprehensive research portfolio that has led to our current understanding of addiction as a preventable developmental disorder and a chronic relapsing disease associated with long lasting changes in the brain and the body that can affect all aspects of a person's life.

NIDA's research portfolio is broad and deep, and spans the continuum of basic neuroscience, behavior and genetics research through applied health services research and epidemiology. Recognizing substance abuse as a disorder that can affect the course of other diseases, including HIV/AIDS, mental illness, trauma, cancer, cardiovascular disease and even obesity is critical to improving the health of our citizens. NIDA has launched several efforts to reach out to numerous professions within the healthcare community to address these issues.

We understand that the Fiscal 2006 budget is very tight and will involve setting priorities and accepting compromise. However, in the current climate, we believe that substance abuse and addiction, which according to the World Health Organization account for nearly 20 percent of disabilities among 15-44 year olds, deserve to be prioritized accordingly. We look forward to working with you to make this a reality.

Sincerely,
The Friends of NIDA