

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2016

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

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

We are writing to thank you for your strong and enduring support of the Special Diabetes Program and ask that you ensure that federal investments continue to be made in this vital program.

For almost twenty years, the Special Diabetes Program – comprised of the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes Research and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians – has worked to improve the lives of the more than 29 million Americans who have diabetes and has provided a solid return on a modest federal investment.

Diabetes continues to be one of this country's most costly diseases in both human and economic terms. It is the leading cause of kidney disease, blindness in working-age adults, and non-traumatic amputations as well as a major cause of heart disease and stroke. More than one in five health care dollars and one in three Medicare dollars are spent on people with diabetes. It is estimated that diabetes costs our nation more than \$245 billion annually.

These costs are expected to increase as the number of people with diabetes continues to grow. Between 2001 and 2009 diabetes among Americans under the age of 20 increased by 21 percent, and over the next 25 years, the number of Americans living with diabetes is predicted to double and related health costs to nearly triple.

While the increase in these statistics is very concerning, the Special Diabetes Program is making meaningful progress. The program funds research that is leading directly to new insights and therapies that are improving the lives of those with diabetes and accelerating progress towards curing and preventing the disease. The program is also making a tremendous difference in the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives, who are disproportionately burdened with type 2 diabetes at nearly three times the rate of the national average.

Some notable developments from the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 include:

- The development of the artificial pancreas system, which will reduce costly and burdensome type 1 diabetes complications and improve quality of life for those with the disease. According to one study, Medicare could save roughly \$1 billion over 25 years with the use of artificial pancreas systems in adults.


- The discovery that intensive blood glucose control can cut in half the onset of impaired kidney function in people with type 1 diabetes. This has the potential to reduce the prevalence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and could save Medicare roughly \$126 billion over 25 years.
- Research that determined therapies to reverse vision loss and treatment for patients with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.
- On-going identification of environmental factors that could influence the onset of type 1 diabetes. Once completed, this research could determine triggers and strategies to prevent the onset of the disease.

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians is also making a huge difference in the health of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals. In these communities, the program has significantly increased the availability of quality diabetes treatment and prevention programs. These programs have resulted in significant improvements in diabetes care, including better glucose control, reduction in LDL cholesterol, and a 48 percent decline in the incidence of end stage renal disease in the targeted populations.

These are only a few of the many developments that are the result of the Special Diabetes Program. The groundbreaking discoveries made possible by this program are already improving care for the more than 29 million Americans with diabetes. They have the potential not only to improve health outcomes for individuals with diabetes, but also to reduce long-term health expenditures from costly complications. Further investment in the Special Diabetes Program is essential to continue vital large-scale trials, plan next steps for research programs, and most effectively allocate research resources – all of which play an important part in helping to better treat, prevent, and ultimately cure type 1 diabetes.

We thank you for your past support of the Special Diabetes Program, which has received overwhelming bipartisan support in the past, and look forward to working with you to ensure that it continues to capitalize on the significant achievements to date and explore the opportunities that remain ahead.

Sincerely,

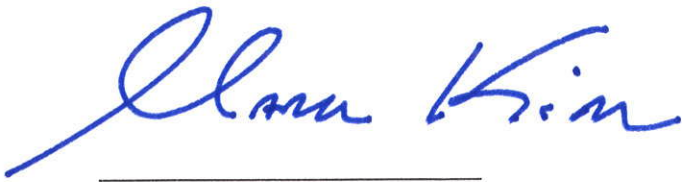


Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

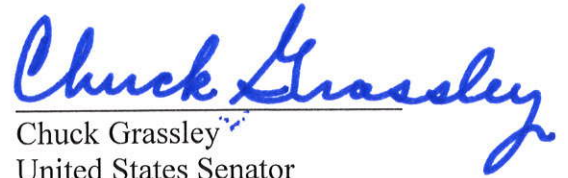


Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator





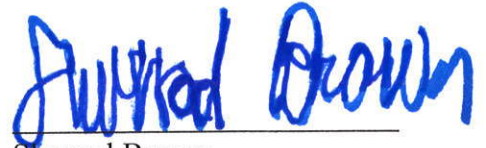
Mark Kirk  
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley  
United States Senator



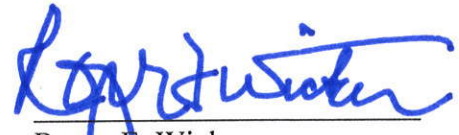
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



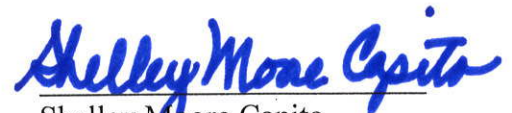
Thad Cochran  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



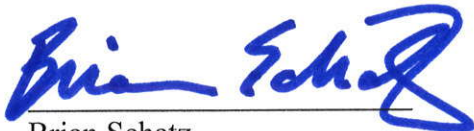
Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



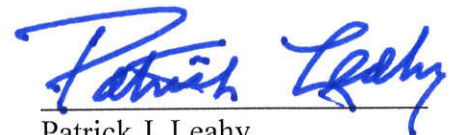
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



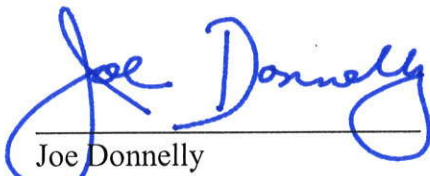
Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator

Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Chris Murphy

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

Kelly A. Ayotte

Kelly A. Ayotte  
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski

Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

John Thune

John Thune  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp

Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Angus King, Jr.


Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

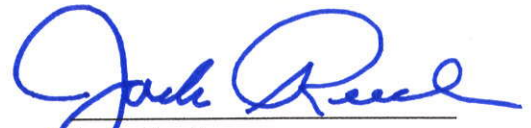
Chris Coons

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator


Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
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Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

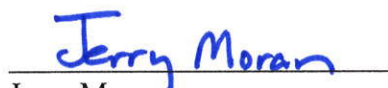
  
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Jack Reed  
United States Senator

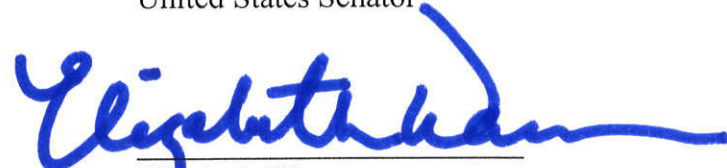
  
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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

  
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Richard Burr  
United States Senator

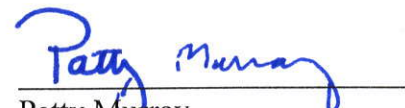
  
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Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

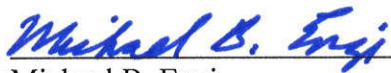
  
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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

  
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Jerry Moran  
United States Senator


  
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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

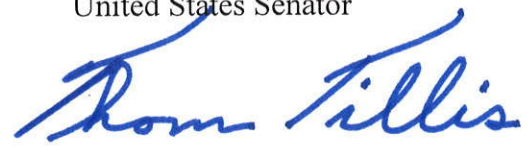
  
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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

  
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Patty Murray  
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Michael B. Enzi  
United States Senator

  
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Jeff Sessions  
United States Senator

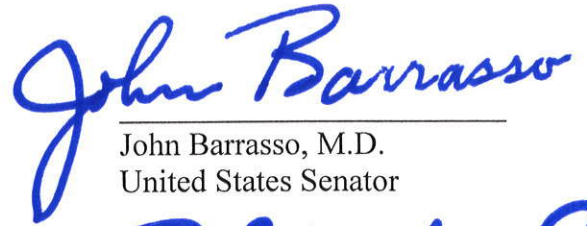
  
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Deb Fischer  
United States Senator

  
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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

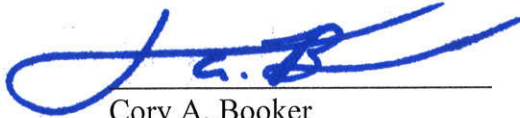




Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



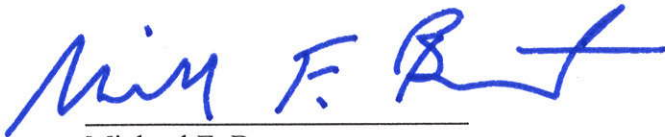
John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



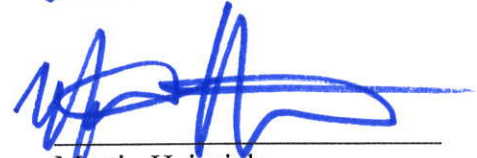
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Jon Tester  
United States Senator



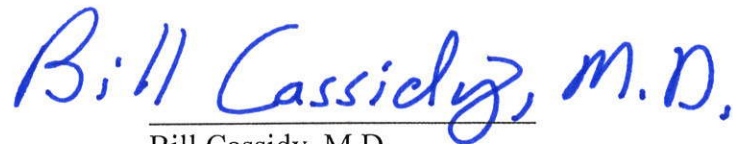
Tim Scott  
United States Senator



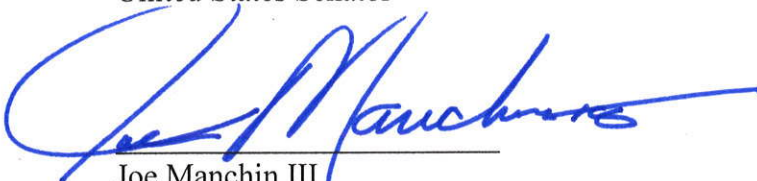
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



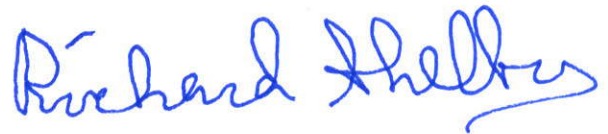
Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



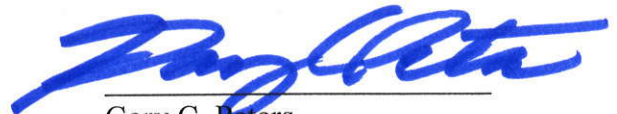
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



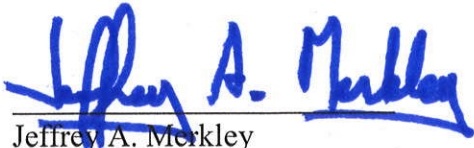
Richard C. Shelby  
United States Senator



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



James E. Risch  
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



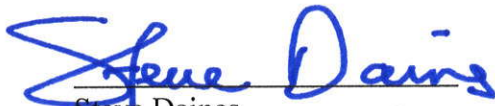
Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



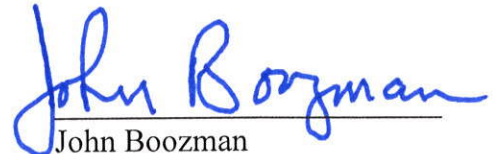
Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



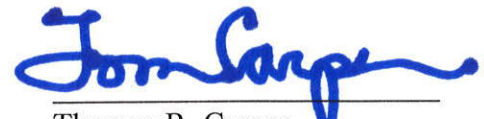
John Hoeven  
United States Senator



John Boozman  
United States Senator



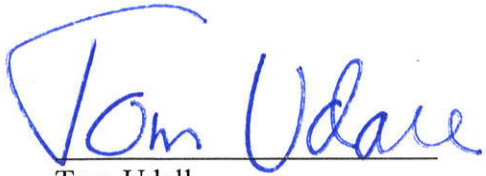
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



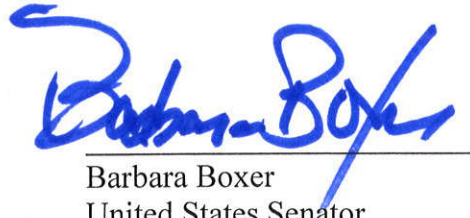
Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



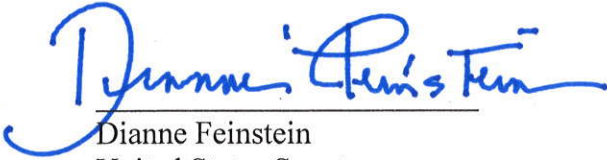
M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator