

May 2, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, we have realized the vital role of occupational safety and health (OSH) to the well-being of our nation's workers and economy. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are foundational to supporting workplaces with quality data and information to achieve their shared missions to protect worker safety and health.

As you craft the FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to support funding for OSHA at a minimum of \$757.5 million. We also ask that you support funding for NIOSH, including its Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AgFF) sector program, Education and Research Centers (ERCs) and the Total Worker Health (TWH) program, at a minimum of \$375.3 million. This funding level includes \$30.5 million for AgFF, \$34 million for the ERCs, and at least an increase of \$4 million for TWH. This regular funding is critical for OSHA and NIOSH to make strategic decisions that will protect workers and their communities while making efficient use of limited taxpayer dollars.

On a typical day, over 11,000 U.S. workers sustain injuries on the job that are serious enough to require medical consultation; 11 workers die from an unintentional injury suffered at work.¹ These tragedies cost an estimated \$3.3 billion per week.²

OSHA ensures safe conditions for America's workers by setting and enforcing standards and providing training, outreach, education, and assistance to employers. OSHA regulations address issues such as the use of personal protective equipment, permissible exposure limits to hazardous materials, and industry-specific safety procedures. One of the most recognized OSHA cooperative programs, the Voluntary Protection Program, identifies employers who successfully implement effective safety and health management systems and maintain injury and illness rates below the national average for their industries. The On-Site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses.

NIOSH is the primary federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury. NIOSH provides national leadership in the field by gathering information, conducting scientific research, and translating knowledge into products and services to support workplace safety.

NIOSH funding supports many important programs, including the AgFF, ERCs and TWH. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry preventable fatality rate is nearly 7 times that of the all-industry average.³ In 2020, over 18,500 workers in this sector were injured seriously enough to require time away from work, a 10% increase from 2019. Half of these injuries

¹ injuryfacts.nsc.org

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

impacting Hispanic or Latino workers. In addition, 511 workers died.⁴ Furthermore, due to its decentralized nature and diverse structure, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector lags other industries in reducing the toll of work-related injuries and illnesses.

Directed by Congress, NIOSH established Centers for Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education and Prevention in 1990 in response to evidence that agricultural workers were suffering higher rates of injury and illness than other U.S. workers. Today, the initiative includes ten regional centers, and one national center to address children's farm safety.⁵ These centers have conducted research leading to evidence-based standards that save lives. It is the only substantive federal effort to ensure safe working conditions for workers in one of our nation's most vital production sectors.

With an aging occupational safety and health workforce, the NIOSH Education and Research Centers are essential for training the next generation of professionals. The ERCs establish academic, labor and industry research partnerships to achieve these goals. Currently, the 18 ERCs⁶ are responsible for supplying many of the country's occupational safety and health graduates who will go on to professional roles. NIOSH also supports education and research in occupational health through academic degree programs and research opportunities.

The National Occupational Research Agenda continues to protect American workers through its work-related illness and injury research, and TWH integrates workplace interventions that protect safety and health with activities that advance the overall well-being of workers.

In order to ensure the health and safety of our nation's workers, we respectfully request that you provide FY 2023 funding for OSHA at a minimum of \$757.5 million and NIOSH at a minimum of \$375.3 million. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

American Board for Occupational Health Nurses (ABOHN)
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM)
American Public Health Association (APHA)
American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP)
American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP)
Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC)
Campbell Institute
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA)
National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
National Safety Council
Safe States Alliance
The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For a list of the current centers, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/oep/agctrhom.html>

⁶ For a list of the current ERCs, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/oep/ercportfolio.html>