

March 27, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you work to craft the FY 18 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, we urge you to support funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) at a minimum of \$573.8 million. This amount is level funded with the amount enacted for Fiscal Year 2016 (and the Fiscal Year 2017 Continuing Resolution) after adjusting for inflation. We also ask that you support funding for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), including its Education and Research Centers (ERCs) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AgFF) sector program, at a minimum of its FY 16 funding level of \$339.121 million. This funding level includes \$26 million for AgFF and \$29.5 million for the ERCs.

Daily, about 12,000 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, and 145 workers die from work-related diseases.^{1,2} This burden costs industry and citizens an estimated \$4.8 billion per week.³

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-cooperative programs, the Voluntary Protection Programs, recognizes employers who successfully implement effective safety and health management systems and maintain injury

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Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health 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 and ERCs. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry fatality rate is nearly 7 times that of the all-industry average. Yearly, about 18,000 workers in this sector are injured seriously enough to require time away from work.⁴ Daily, an average of over 350 workers in this sector sustain

¹ National Safety Council. (2017). *Injury Facts*®, 2017 Edition.

² Leigh, J. P. (2011). Economic burden of occupational injury and illness in the United States. *Milbank Quarterly*, 89(4), 728-772

³ Ibid

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2016). Table 2. numbers of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses by case type and ownership, selected industries, 2015. Retrieved March 24, 2017, from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/osh_10292015.htm

injuries serious enough to require medical consultation, and more than one worker dies from an injury suffered at work.⁵ 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