



July 23, 2009

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

As the leading research and advocacy organization for Alzheimer's disease in the United States, the Alzheimer's Association appreciates your tireless commitment to helping people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers in the nation. The Alzheimer's Association enthusiastically supports the *Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2009* (S. 1492), which you introduced with Senator Bond (R-MO) and other original cosponsors, including Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Richard Burr (R-NC), Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY), and Robert Menendez (D-NJ). We thank you for introducing this important legislation in the Senate. We also are pleased that a companion bipartisan bill (H.R. 3286) was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressmen Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), and others.

As you are aware, with an aging baby boomer population at the epicenter of an escalating Alzheimer crisis, the disease is quickly becoming the country's biggest, broadest and most expensive problem – to individuals, families, and the healthcare system. For the last six years, federal funding for Alzheimer research has declined in real terms while the loss of lives and costs to Medicare and Medicaid continue to soar. By calling for a significant increase of funding for Alzheimer's at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to \$2 billion, this legislation authorizes the necessary resources to restore momentum in the pursuit of better diagnosis, prevention and treatment. Advances and progress in the various areas of Alzheimer research have the potential to save millions of lives and save billions of dollars to the nation's public health programs.

Equally important as investing in the research is helping the nearly 10 million Alzheimer caregivers today who wrestle with the financial, physical, and emotional challenges of caring for a loved one with this disease. *The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act* seeks to provide them with vital resources and tools to assist them in this demanding role. It also calls for a National Summit on Alzheimer's to look at promising research avenues and programs that are important in fighting this disease and supporting those who are struggling with it.

The Alzheimer's Association sincerely appreciates your leadership in raising awareness about the need to increase funding for Alzheimer research and caregiver support services. We look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Robert Egge
Vice President, Public Policy & Advocacy