

**Commerce, Finance, Revenue and Bonding  
and Labor and Public Employees Committees  
Joint Public Hearing on Jobs and Jackson Laboratory**

**October 20, 2011**

**Testimony**

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members and members of the Commerce, Finance, Revenue & Bonding, and Labor and Public Employees Committees. My name is Brent Graveley, and I am a Professor in the Department of Genetics and Developmental Biology at the University of Connecticut Health Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of the Jackson Laboratory proposal.

I was recruited to the University of Connecticut Health Center in 1999 as part of the UCHC research strategic plan that was funded by the legislature. The State of Connecticut Stem Cell Research Program provided funds to study human embryonic stem cells at a time when such research was banned by the federal government. This program was, and continues to be, an unqualified success that created jobs and funding for scientists to move into this new and exciting field for the first time. It is State investments such as these that have helped to attract and retain world-class scientists.

The Jackson Lab initiative, hot on the heels of the Bioscience Connecticut initiative, is yet another investment that will transform Connecticut. There is no question that the future of science and medicine is rooted in our ability to understand the human genome. Each of us carries a slightly different copy of the human genetic code – nearly identical, but with subtle differences that make us who we are but also are also largely responsible for the variety of diseases that affect all of us. The proposed Jackson Lab facility will be one of the first in the nation to focus exclusively on personalized medicine. This, coupled with the scale of this endeavor, will firmly place Connecticut and UConn as leaders in personalized medicine, and in one fell swoop catapult UConn among the top research Universities in the nation.

The arrival of Jackson Lab will also profoundly change my own research. As one of the only scientists at UCHC to study the genome, my work relies upon collaborations with scientists at the leading institutions across the US such as MIT and the University of California, Berkeley. For example, my lab is currently part of a \$3.5 million per year NIH grant that is split among these institutions. I will be submitting another \$3.5 million per year NIH grant application with similar collaborators next month. However, with the arrival of Jackson Lab, I will be able to collaborate with the best genomic scientists in the nation by simply walking across the street, keeping these large grant funds and jobs in Connecticut. I also expect to be awarded even larger grants involving collaborations with my future Jackson Lab colleagues. Furthermore, just as the Stem Cell program has increased the interactions between scientists at UConn, UCHC, Wesleyan and Yale, the arrival of Jackson Labs will set the stage for even more interactions of this nature, creating a true research triangle in the northeast. Thank you for your attention and I urge your support of the Jackson Laboratory proposal.