

**Irina Bezsonova
Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing
March 6, 2014**

H.B. No. 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget For the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, and Making Appropriations Thereafter and Other Provisions Related to Revenue

Dear members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Irina Bezsonova and I am an Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology and Biophysics at the University of Connecticut Health Center. It is my privilege to speak with you regarding the invaluable contribution of the DPH Biomedical Research Trust Fund to supporting front end research and education in Connecticut.

In 2013, I was awarded \$300,000 in funding to support biomedical research I am conducting on the USP7 protein, which is a promising target for anti-cancer drug design. The DPH support was absolutely essential for this project. Furthermore, the DPH Biomedical Research Trust support has allowed us to develop a competitive research program with the potential to bring in external funding for our future research. The DPH support has been invaluable for educating the next generation of researchers in my laboratory, including graduate and medical students, undergraduates as well as high-school students. The DPH support, therefore, is also an investment in our future workforce and hopefully their continued interest in pursuing discoveries for disease.

Why do we need invest in biomedical research and who will benefit from it? We all will. As a cancer survivor and a diabetic I witnessed in my own lifetime how basic science discoveries led to the development of novel medical treatments that saved lives and greatly improved the quality of life.

I am very proud to be a biomedical researcher and educator in a state that sees the value of investment in biosciences. As you are faced with some very difficult choices, I respectfully request you consider continuing funding the Biomedical Research Trust Fund. Thank you.