



June 23, 2005

The Honorable Randy Neugebauer  
429 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Neugebauer,

The Treatment Advocacy Center applauds your continued efforts as a watchdog to ensure that funding for the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) is directed to clinical and treatment aspects of serious mental illnesses.

Despite continuing pressure over the past few years, NIMH continues to misallocate public research dollars that should be used to offer hope of better treatments and possibly a cure for severe mental illnesses, like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

We fully endorse your amendment. The two grants cited in your amendment are perfect examples – they are wholly unrelated to mental disorders. If the National Cancer Institute was funding research wholly unrelated to cancer, there would, and should, be widespread public uproar. It is unfortunate that it requires a legislative effort to keep NIMH to its actual mission.

At any given time, there are approximately one-quarter of a million seriously mentally ill people who are homeless or incarcerated; countless others commit suicide or are victimized. We must dedicate our efforts to finding the causes and cures of these debilitating brain diseases. It is highly unlikely that studying happiness in interpersonal relationships – or how pigeons see the world – will move us any closer to that goal.

NIMH's research decisions would be comical if not for the gravity of their consequences. Three more years of funding research on pigeons' perceptions? The 15 years and \$1.5 million in federal research dollars already spent could have led to real breakthroughs in schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

It gives new meaning to the concept of "bird brained."

Sincerely,

Mary T. Zdanowicz, J.D.  
Executive Director  
Treatment Advocacy Center