

March 3, 2003

*Sent to Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees
House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
Washington, DC*

Dear <Member's Name>:

One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a collaboration of more than 40 public interest groups representing the millions of Americans impacted by cancer, was formed to unify the public health community and present a cohesive message to the Administration and Congress regarding the funding levels necessary to defeat cancer. As the House/Senate Budget Committee prepares the FY 2004 budget resolution, we write to seek your continued commitment to cancer programs funded in the Function 550 account.

Specifically, we ask that Function 550 include increases that reflect the important cancer research and prevention initiatives at the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, The Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We acknowledge the challenges facing the Public Health Service as our nation prepares for potential bioterrorism threats and recognize the need to dedicate resources in the Function 550 account to this goal. As organizations dedicated to conquering cancer, however, it is our responsibility and obligation to stay focused on the more than half million Americans who die annually from cancer, the over 1.3 million who will be newly diagnosed with cancer this year, and their family members. It is critical that the nation continue to address the ongoing burden of chronic diseases like cancer on the population and the public health system.

Enclosed is a comprehensive list of the programs and funding levels we support in the fight against cancer. We respectfully request that you include adequate funding in the Budget Resolution to accommodate these requests. This funding is necessary to assist those on the front lines battling cancer: the researcher striving every day to defeat cancer, the person without access to adequate cancer screening, the family with a loved one who has been newly diagnosed with the disease. Research holds the key to improved prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment. To complement the strides being made everyday by researchers, increased funding also is needed to enhance cancer prevention, awareness, and early detection programs and to ensure that these programs and research discoveries reach all Americans.

OVAC encourages you to take these vital steps to help the nation defeat cancer. Please contact any of the organizations listed below if we can be of assistance or provide additional information. We thank you for your continued work on behalf of all Americans affected by cancer.