

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 242

Celebrating 25 years of success from the Office of Research on Women's  
Health at the National Institutes of Health.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 5, 2015

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## RESOLUTION

Celebrating 25 years of success from the Office of Research  
on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health.

Whereas, on September 10, 1990, the Office of Research on  
Women's Health (in this resolution referred to as  
"ORWH") was established at the National Institutes of  
Health (in this resolution referred to as "NIH") to—

- (1) ensure that women were included in NIH-funded  
clinical research;
- (2) set research priorities to address gaps in sci-  
entific knowledge; and
- (3) promote biomedical research careers for women;

Whereas ORWH was established in law by the National Insti-  
tutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993 (Public Law  
103–43; 107 Stat. 122) and implemented the law requir-

ing researchers to include women in NIH-funded tests of new drugs and other clinical trials;

Whereas, today, more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the participants in NIH-funded clinical trials are women, enabling the development of clinical approaches to prevention, diagnosis, or treatment appropriate for women;

Whereas, in 2015, ORWH, with enthusiastic support from NIH leadership, announced that, beginning in January 2016, NIH-funded scientists must account for the possible role of sex as a biological variable in vertebrate animal and human studies;

Whereas ORWH, along with NIH leadership, enhances awareness of the need to adhere to principles of rigor and transparency, including the need to publish sex-specific results to inform the treatment of women, men, boys, and girls;

Whereas, over the past 25 years, ORWH has helped expand research on women's health beyond its roots in reproductive health to include—

(1) the study of the health of women across the lifespans of women; and

(2) biomedical and behavioral research from cells to selves;

Whereas, by studying both sexes, ORWH is leading the scientific community to make discoveries headed toward treatments that are more personalized for both women and men;

Whereas, today, ORWH communicates through programs and policies that sex and gender affect health, wellness, and how diseases progress;

Whereas turning discovery into health for all, the NIH motto, means studying both females and males across the biomedical research continuum;

Whereas the ORWH Specialized Centers of Research on Sex Differences program supports established scientists who do basic, clinical, and translational research with a sex and gender focus;

Whereas all NIH Institutes and Centers fund and encourage scientists at universities across the Nation to conduct research on the health of women and on sex and gender influences;

Whereas, over the past 25 years, ORWH has established several career-enhancement initiatives for women in biomedicine, including the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health program that connects junior faculty with mentors who share interests in women's health research;

Whereas ORWH co-directs the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers, which develops and evaluates policies to promote the recruitment, retention, and sustained advancement of women scientists;

Whereas the Women's Health Initiative (in this resolution referred to as "WHI") marked the first long-term study of its kind and resulted in a wealth of information so that women and their physicians can make more informed decisions regarding postmenopausal hormone therapy;

Whereas WHI reduced the incidence of breast cancer by 10,000 to 15,000 cases per year, and the overall health care savings far exceeded the WHI investment;

Whereas ORWH supported the National Cancer Institute's development of a vaccine that prevents the transmission

of Human Papilloma Virus, resulting in a decrease in the number of cases of cervical cancer;

Whereas, in 1994, ORWH co-sponsored with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases a landmark study, the results of which showed that giving the drug AZT to HIV-infected women with little or no prior antiretroviral therapy reduced the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV by  $\frac{2}{3}$ ;

Whereas, according to the CDC, perinatal HIV infections in the United States have dropped by more than 90 percent;

Whereas ORWH co-funded a large clinical study of the genetic and environmental risk factors for ischemic stroke, which identified a strong relationship between the number of cigarettes smoked per day and the probability of ischemic stroke in young women, prompting the targeting of smoking as a preventable and modifiable risk factor for cerebrovascular disease in young women; and

Whereas, over the past 25 years, ORWH has contributed support toward major advances in knowledge about the genetic risk for breast cancer, and discovery of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genetic risk markers has enabled better-informed genetic counseling and treatment for members of families that carry mutant alleles: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2                (1) ORWH has improved and saved the lives of  
3        countless women worldwide and must remain intact  
4        for this and future generations;

1           (2) there remain striking sex and gender dif-  
2           ferences in many diseases and conditions, on which  
3           ORWH should continue to focus, including—

4                   (A) autoimmune diseases;

5                   (B) cancer;

6                   (C) cardiovascular diseases;

7                   (D) depression and brain disorders;

8                   (E) Alzheimer’s disease;

9                   (F) diabetes;

10                  (G) chronic diseases and disorders;

11                  (H) infectious diseases;

12                  (I) obesity; and

13                  (J) addictive disorders;

14           (3) ORWH must continue to focus on ensuring  
15           that NIH funds biomedical research that considers  
16           sex as a basic biological variable, across the research  
17           spectrum from basic to clinical studies; and

18           (4) the Director of the NIH should continue to  
19           consult and involve ORWH on all matters related to  
20           the influence of sex and gender on health, especially  
21           those pertaining to the consideration of sex as a bio-  
22           logical variable in research with vertebrate animals  
23           and humans.

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