

**Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer (IA-01) Testimony**

House Appropriations Committee Member Day

June 23, 2020 – Virtual Hearing, Cisco Webex

I'm Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer from Iowa's First Congressional District.

Thank you Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger for holding this hearing and giving members a chance to speak.

I'm here today to talk about the need for increased funding for endometriosis research.

This is something that is very important to me and millions of other women and their families.

Endometriosis is a painful condition that involves tissue growing outside of the uterus and putting pressure on other organs. It is a leading cause of infertility and affects one in ten women.

This is so important to me because I am one of the 7 million women in our country living with endometriosis.

Earlier this year, I spoke on the House floor about my story. I also launched the bipartisan House Endometriosis Caucus.

I wanted to give a voice to other women who are impacted, and let my colleagues know we have a severe lack of funding for treatment and a cure.

That's why I am asking the committee to include report language to direct the National Institute for Child and Human Development to provide at least \$26 million to endometriosis research in Fiscal Year 2021.

This would double the investment of where we are currently, but it is the least we should do.

Historically, the NIH has dedicated as little as 82 cents to endometriosis research for every woman who has it.

I am also asking that endometriosis remain eligible for funding under the peer-reviewed medical research program at the Department of Defense.

During Fiscal Year 2018, endometriosis was eligible for funding under the program, but was dropped from the list of eligible conditions in Fiscal Year 2019 despite the pressing research opportunities in this area.

While I am encouraged that endometriosis was added back to the list of eligible conditions for the peer-reviewed medical research program for Fiscal Year 2020, this creates uncertainty and ultimately hurts progress when it comes to better understanding this condition.

For that reason, I ask that the Committee ensure that endometriosis is eligible in Fiscal Year 2021 and for years to come.

Almost everyone that I speak to has a connection to endometriosis. When my hairdresser overheard me talking about my condition on a phone call, she told me that she has dealt with endometriosis for years and had no idea that we had that shared that experience.

I've also heard from some of my colleagues in Congress that they have a loved one or friend with the condition.

In the time since I first shared my story on the House floor, I have received a flood of comments and messages from people all over the country who finally felt someone here had their back and understood the pain.

Many women, and even men, from around the country have reached out to me to share their own stories and experiences with endometriosis.

I heard from a woman who shared that she experienced excruciating pain and visited different doctors for over ten years before she could get an accurate diagnosis.

Another woman we heard from had to have four surgeries in three years to manage her condition.

These stories are all too common. We must do more to help those living with endometriosis.

With that, I thank the Committee for their consideration of our request and I hope that you will move forward with providing much-needed resources for endometriosis research.