



Coalition for National Science Funding

June 13, 2012

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

As representatives of U.S. science, engineering, and higher education organizations, we write to you in strong support for the federal research and development budget of the National Science Foundation (NSF), and its mission—created over 60 years ago—to advance research across a broad spectrum of disciplines, research that has fueled American economic growth for decades.

NSF is unique among federal agencies in that it supports all disciplines in a balanced portfolio that uses the scientific peer review system as the foundation for awarding research grants based on merit.

As you prepare to debate the Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) appropriations bill for fiscal year 2013, the undersigned organizations urge you to reject attempts to reduce funding for NSF. We also stand in strong opposition to legislative attempts to micromanage NSF and undermine the merit review process by singling out specific programs for elimination as recently occurred in the House.

In 2006, Alan Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, testified before the Senate in support of NSF research: “Every major issue facing modern society and every major issue facing our economic competitiveness will ultimately be multidisciplinary in nature...[requiring] the integration of the physical sciences or biological sciences with the social and behavioral sciences.”

We recognize the challenge that our nation faces in addressing the deficit and revitalizing our national economy. However, eliminating support for specific disciplines, such as the House did with respect to political science, sets a dangerous precedent that, in the end, will inhibit scientific progress and restrain our international competitiveness economically and with regard to national security. Congress should exercise its oversight responsibilities, but second-guessing the scientific process could have a chilling effect on scientists and young people considering a future in science. The country cannot afford to lose the incredible talent, experience, and energies of its scientists, regardless of their discipline.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations again urge you to protect the integrity of the scientific enterprise by ensuring that the NSF and its independent scientific panels determine where the best scientific opportunities are and how to absorb any potential reductions to its budget. Allocating federal investments competitively through scientific merit review is the very process that has led this country to be the world leader in science. We encourage you to provide Congressional oversight by protecting that process rather than allowing others to threaten critical contributions to our innovative spirit and knowledge base.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Any questions about this letter should be directed to Sam Rankin at 202-588-1100 or smr@ams.org

American Association for the Advancement of Science	Brown University	New York University
American Association of Physics Teachers	California Institute of Technology	Northwestern University
American Astronomical Society	Case Western Reserve University	Optical Society of America
American Chemical Society	Cognitive Science Society	Oregon State University
American Economic Association	Columbia University	Penn State University
American Educational Research Association	Computing Research Association	Population Association of America
American Geophysical Union	Consortium for Ocean Leadership	Psychonomic Society
American Geosciences Institute	Consortium of Social Science Associations	Purdue University
American Institute of Biological Sciences	Council of Energy Research and Education Leaders	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
American Institute of Physics	Council of Environmental Deans and Directors	Research!America
American Mathematical Society	Council of Graduate Schools	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
American Physiological Society	Crop Science Society of America	Social Psychology Network
American Political Science Association	CUAHSI	Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology
American Psychological Association	DOSECC, Inc.	Society for Computers in Psychology
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	Duke University	Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
American Society for Engineering Education	Earthquake Engineering Research Institute	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
American Society for Microbiology	Ecological Society of America	Society for Mathematical Psychology
American Society of Agronomy	Emory University	Society for Research in Child Development
American Society of Civil Engineers	Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences	Society of Experimental Social Psychology
American Sociological Association	Genetics Society of America	Soil Science Society of America
American Statistical Association	Geological Society of America	SPIE, International Society for Optics and Photonics
APS Physics	Georgia Institute of Technology	Stanford University
Association for Psychological Science	Harvard University	State University of New York
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography	Human Factors and Ergonomics Society	The Johns Hopkins University
Association for Women in Mathematics	IEEE - USA	The Ohio State University
Association for Women in Science	Indiana University	University at Albany
Association of American Medical Colleges	Kent State University	University of Arizona
Association of American Universities	Law and Society Association	University of California System
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists	Linguistic Society of America	University of Chicago
Association of Independent Research Institutes	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Colorado Boulder
Association of Population Centers	Mathematical Association of America	University of Delaware
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)	Michigan State University	University of Illinois
Association of Research Libraries	Midwest Political Science Association	University of Kentucky
Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy	Museum of Science, Boston	University of Maryland
Association of University Research Parks	National Academy of Neuropsychology	University of Michigan
Behavior Genetics Associations	National Association of Marine Laboratories	University of Oregon
Binghamton University	National Communication Association	University of Pennsylvania
Biophysical Society	National Council for Science and the Environment	University of Washington
	National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)	University of Wisconsin - Madison
	National Postdoctoral Association	Vanderbilt University
		Washington University in St. Louis
		West Virginia University
		Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution