



H.R. 144, the Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act

part of the America COMPETES Act

The COVID-19 crisis has created unprecedented disruptions to the U.S. research enterprise. Efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus have resulted in a significant decline in research productivity across all science and engineering disciplines, with women researchers and those belonging to other underrepresented groups being particularly affected. To save money, research universities have resorted to hiring freezes, resulting in a 70% drop in faculty openings in one year. Early career researchers are particularly vulnerable to this contraction of the academic research job market, and many are at risk of having their careers derailed entirely. Early career researchers are highly productive scientists who play a major role in the education and training of undergraduate and graduate STEM students. The loss of this talent from our research ecosystem would have lasting harmful effects for U.S. innovation and competitiveness.

The *Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act* provides a bridge to help recent Ph.D. graduates stay on their chosen career path as they navigate the disruptions to the academic research job market due to the pandemic. The legislation establishes a two-year, \$250 million agency-wide early career fellowship pilot program at NSF. This will enable two cohorts of 1,600 fellows working in all STEM disciplines to carry out their research at the U.S. institutions of their choosing.