



March 11, 2014

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The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on Research and Technology  
1005 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Smith and Bucshon:

I am writing on behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Last year AAAS signed, along with leading representatives of the business, higher education, and scientific and engineering communities, a set of "Guiding Principles" regarding the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. In that statement we emphasized the importance of "steady and sustained real growth in funding" and the need "to maintain a strong foundation of basic research across all scientific disciplines."

The recently introduced FIRST Act, unfortunately, does not align with these principles, and the allocations for NSF and NIST are below the rate of inflation and hence do not reflect "real growth." While we appreciate the language in the bill about the importance of funding across all scientific disciplines, the spending levels—coupled with directorate-level allocations—do not reflect real growth in federal funding of basic scientific research, particularly for the social, behavioral, and economic research portfolio.

The America COMPETES Act was originally crafted to reflect the aspirations of our nation to advance scientific and technological discovery and to promote innovation and economic development. While there are other aspects of the FIRST Act that are positive, for example, coordination of federal STEM Education programs; ultimately the legislation falls short of the Guiding Principles that we shared last year.

Given the impact that this legislation could have to the research community we encourage the committee to continue to work in partnership with the various stakeholders to address these and other concerns.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner