



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU STATEMENT ON H.R. 1806, AMERICA COMPETES REAUTHORIZATION

AAU Opposes H.R. 1806 in Its Current Form; Legislation to Reauthorize America COMPETES Needs to Help Close the Innovation Deficit

The Association of American Universities appreciates the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's intention to reauthorize the America COMPETES Act, which authorizes research, engineering, and education programs supported by the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The America COMPETES Acts of 2007 and 2010 established a unifying vision for enhancing America's competitiveness through science and innovation. Unfortunately, the bill that the Committee plans to mark up this week, H.R. 1806, falls short of the vision created by the first two COMPETES Acts.

We recognize that the overly tight caps on domestic discretionary spending imposed by the Budget Control Act make it very difficult to provide the investments in research that are needed to advance the nation's innovative capacity and global competitiveness. Nevertheless, we are disappointed in the overall level of investments in research proposed by this bill. Moreover, we are deeply concerned about proposed cuts to vital areas of research at NSF and the Department of Energy, including NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences and Geosciences directorates and DOE's ARPA-E, Biological and Environmental Research, and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy programs.

While we appreciate that the Committee has improved some of the policy provisions from legislation it approved in the last Congress, we are concerned about provisions that remain in H.R. 1806, as well as new requirements that were not included in previous bills.

For these reasons, we oppose the legislation in its current form. As this bill advances, however, we look forward to working with the Committee and others to improve H.R. 1806 so that it sustains this nation's economic competitiveness and carries forward the original vision of the COMPETES Act.

Stagnant research budgets at the COMPETES agencies and other federal research agencies, combined with the rapid increases in research funding made by our economic competitors, are creating an innovation deficit that threatens this nation's role as global innovation leader. It is vital that any legislation to reauthorize the COMPETES Act provide the investments in research that we need to close the innovation deficit.

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