



Statement Regarding FIRST Act

The foundation for our global competitiveness is eroding. As over 200 university presidents wrote to President Obama and Congress, America faces an *innovation deficit* due to “the combination of eroding federal investments in research and higher education, additional cuts due to sequestration, and the enormous resources other nations are pouring into these areas....”

Now is the time for Congress to act to restore federal funding to the nation’s science agencies. A new bill to reauthorize programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), *Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology (FIRST) Act of 2014*, does not create the steady, sustained, and real growth targets so critically needed for NSF.

The FIRST Act also undermines the growth of basic science research at the NSF in other fundamental ways. It singles out the Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Sciences Directorate at NSF for a massive and unwarranted cut in funding.

The authorization provisions for NSF as a whole and the SBE Directorate, in particular, depart from the key “guiding principles” prepared by leading representatives of the science, business, and higher education communities, and endorsed by numerous scientific societies and universities around the country.

In the bill, the House Science Committee also seeks new accountability and transparency measures at NSF. While we agree that transparency and accountability in the use of public funds is a necessity, we believe that the additional burdens placed on the review of scientific proposals at NSF under the accountability provisions are not necessary to achieve the Committee’s goals. Indeed, NSF is in the midst of an examination of processes that will meet the Committee’s aims.

The provisions noted above undercut the nation’s ability to build the scientific infrastructure that is needed to close the innovation deficit and advance scientific knowledge across *all* basic science research areas at NSF. For these reasons, we oppose passage of the FIRST Act as it is currently written.

We urge the House Science Committee to make visible its commitment to science, including basic research in the social and behavioral sciences at NSF. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to create a bill that facilitates science and benefits the nation.

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Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) is a coalition of scientific societies that share an interest in advancing the sciences of mind, brain, and behavior.