

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski,

The undersigned organizations and institutions would like to thank you for crafting and shepherding through committee the fiscal year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act and accompanying committee report. We appreciate your recognition of the importance of investing at the National Science Foundation (NSF) across all scientific disciplines, leaving directorate funding decisions to experts at NSF with technical input from the scientific community, the National Academies, the National Science Board, and other bodies.

We also appreciate language included in the committee report that supports NSF's peer review process "to identify and recommend funding for scientifically meritorious research," and the report's statement that "NSF's ability to fund cutting-edge research helps keep the United States at the forefront of research across all scientific disciplines, which in turn builds the technological capabilities that underpin economic growth and prosperity."

The NSF's merit review process is the global gold standard for selecting the most promising research within and across scientific fields of study, including the biological, computer, geosciences, mathematical, physical, social and behavioral sciences, and engineering. The merit review system remains the best means for meeting national scientific priorities, fostering innovation, and determining which grant proposals to fund.

With regard to the overall funding level for NSF, we are concerned that what amounts to essentially flat funding for this agency—at a time when other countries are making significant investments in basic research—could lead to the erosion of America's preeminence in innovation and scientific research. We know that the subcommittee is keenly interested in maintaining our nation's edge in producing the best science and scientists, and we urge you to continue to seek opportunities to maximize funding for this critical agency.

We thank you again for your leadership on these issues and look forward to working with you further as the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act advances through the Senate.

Sincerely,

American Anthropological Association
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geophysical Union
American Geosciences Institute
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Political Science Association

American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
Association for Psychological Science
Association for Women in Mathematics
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Biophysical Society
Brandeis University
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Scientific Society Presidents
Council on Undergraduate Research
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Florida State University
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology
Midwest Political Science Association
Penn State University
Population Association of America
SAGE Publishing
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Neuroscience
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Riverside
University of California System
University of Michigan