

February 28, 2006

Honorable Bart Gordon
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Science
394 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Gordon:

The basic science community is extremely appreciative and supportive of your recent legislative initiatives to put the United States back on track with its dual competitiveness and innovativeness engines, basic research and technology. Your commitment to basic science is critically important to all Americans, and the 42 organizations that have signed onto this letter are already working to support your efforts.

We write now to express two things. First, we commend the goals of H.R. 4434, 4435, and 4596 and assure you that we will be working among our respective constituencies to promote initiatives that bolster the federal science and technology research enterprise.

Second, we want to formally convey the extremely important sentiment that efforts to boost the national investment in our future competitiveness and innovation capabilities rely *inclusively* on all basic sciences and technologies. Just as it proves impossible to predict the potential of today's basic research findings, it is equally difficult to predict the synergies between seemingly disparate sciences and methodologies. It is key, therefore, that your efforts not be misconstrued as primarily a push for the "physical sciences," to the exclusion of other sciences providing critical scientific advances through NSF support. The division of sciences into disciplines is an arbitrary human invention that nature routinely ignores. In fact, as NSF Director Arden Bement publicly stated upon the release of the proposed FY 2007 NSF budget, there is a growing synergy among the biological, physical, and social sciences. The U.S. investment in science should likewise increasingly reflect such an inclusive organization.

The term "physical sciences" is not currently defined in H.R. 4596, and it is not used consistently in that the more inclusive "sciences" is sometimes used in its stead. We urge you to strongly consider the sentiment expressed in the *Gathering Storm* report, the impetus for your legislation: ". . . This special attention does not mean that there should be a disinvestment in such important fields as the life sciences or the social sciences. A balanced research portfolio in all fields of science and engineering research is critical to U.S. prosperity. Increasingly, the most significant new scientific and engineering advances are formed to cut across several disciplines."

Feel free to call on us at any time as you continue to address the nation's STEM needs through your legislative work.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Phytopathological Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Sociological Association

Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback
Association for Behavior Analysis
Association for Psychological Science
Association of American Geographers
Association of Population Centers
Behavior Genetics Association
Biophysical Society
Coalition for Funding Agricultural Research Missions
Cognitive Science Society
Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
Institute of Food Technologists
International Behavioral Neuroscience Society
International Society for Developmental Psychobiology
National Academy of Neuropsychology
National Council for Science and the Environment
Population Association of America
Psychonomic Society
Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology
Society for Computers in Psychology
Society for Experimental Social Psychology
Society for Judgment and Decision Making
Society for Mathematical Psychology
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society for Psychophysiological Research
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for Research in Psychopathology
Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology
Soil Science Society of America
Weed Science Society of America

cc: Honorable Sherwood Boehlert
Chairman, House Committee on Science