

Statement of Kellye A. Eversole
On Behalf of the American Phytopathological Society
Before the
National Academies
Committee on Ensuring the Best Science and Technology
Presidential and Federal Advisory Committee Appointments

Mr. Chairman, Madame Vice-Chair, members of the Committee. I am Kellye Eversole, president of Eversole Associates, a public affairs and science and technology consulting firm. I am speaking today on behalf of one of my clients, the American Phytopathological Society. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you.

The American Phytopathological Society, APS, was founded in 1909 and is the premiere educational, professional, and scientific society dedicated to the promotion of plant health and plant disease management for the common good. The Society represents the interest of five thousand scientists whose pivotal research advances the understanding of the science of plant pathology and its application to plant health.

The APS concurs with the findings and recommendations of the 2000 report. We believe that the 2000 report includes an excellent summary of the major obstacles in recruiting the best scientific and technical leadership for science and technology presidential appointments. We, strongly, support the goal to increase the breadth and depth of the pool of candidates.

We believe that federal advisory committees associated with science-based policy or the reviews of research proposals provide an invaluable service for program administrators. We believe that federal advisory committees can be grouped into two broad categories – (1) general, non-scientific committees that provide general advice and recommendations for programs; and (2) scientific committees that provide specific, science-based advice and recommendations to the Administration.

We are concerned about any effort to turn the scientific committees into general, nonscientific committees for the purpose of advocating for

specific, pre-determined policies that are not necessarily grounded on sound science. We believe that this defeats the purpose of scientific committees. For the scientific committees, we believe that the goal of these committees should be to provide the Administration with the most objective, science-based recommendations as is possible, without regard to outside influences. These committees should be able to provide advice based on the state-of-the-art of a particular subject and should be a resource for the administrators. As such, we believe that these committees should have members representing as many scientific disciplines that are germane to the issue under study as possible. We believe that the pool of candidates for these committees should include candidates from all scientific societies, including the smaller scientific societies, such as the APS. While our mission is to protect the nation's food, feed, and fiber supply on which we are all dependent, we are overlooked often because we are a small society.

As the committee prepares the 2004 report, we, strongly, encourage you to include specific language recommending that the pool of candidates for presidential appointments and for federal advisory committee members include candidates from the smaller scientific societies that have been generally underrepresented in the past.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to be here today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.