

March XX, 2021

President Joe Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of Research!America and the organizations below, we are writing to respectfully request that you champion the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R.869/S.289) and include full funding for the initiatives it would create in any FY21 or FY22 spending proposal you advance.

The bipartisan RISE Act, led by Representatives Diana DeGette (D-CO), Fred Upton (R-MI), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH) in the House and Senators Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Gary Peters (D-MI) in the Senate, would provide \$25 billion to help restore our nation's research capacity to its pre-pandemic strength, prevent setbacks against the formidable challenges our nation faces, and further the goal of a robust, diverse, and inclusive STEM workforce.

The widespread, detrimental impact of COVID-19 on research and researchers, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, runs counter to the never more visible need for a strong and prolific research & development (R&D) ecosystem. According to a 2020 report from the Council on Government Relations, projected research output loss due to COVID-19 ranges between 20 to 40 percent, with a "potential impact approaching tens of billions of dollars across the entire U.S. research enterprise."

Beyond the immediate damaging financial losses at the local, state, and federal levels, the long-term repercussions of interrupted research mean that future scientific innovations and discoveries will be squandered or severely delayed. Whether the measure is societal progress, our nation's ability to preempt and respond to threats like COVID-19, potential lives saved, or U.S. economic competitiveness, failing to shore up our weakened research infrastructure contravenes the best interests of the American people.

Further, the STEM careers of women, minorities, and other underrepresented populations have been placed in particular jeopardy by disrupted training grants and research schedules. Without the contributions of these groups, the full potential of our nation's research enterprise will not be fully actualized.

The role that research plays in strengthening and sustaining economic growth aligns with your Administration's plans to mobilize American ingenuity and talent to respond to the challenges we face. The positive economic impacts of R&D are well worth the investment in it. Below are just two examples of how prioritizing R&D investment fortifies economic stability.

**Investing in R&D improves the lives of all Americans and enables them to contribute to our economy for longer periods of time.** Research-related gains writ large include life-saving treatments and vaccines, more efficient and environmentally-friendly production techniques, and better ways to harness and use energy and advances in artificial intelligence and robotics. In public health alone, between 1970 and 2000, research-related gains in average life expectancy had an estimated economic value of \$95 trillion, roughly \$3.2 trillion per year. A healthier workforce better able to contribute to our economy is an overarching societal benefit that can be directly linked to R&D.

**We are losing our R&D advantage, when innovative capacity has never been more important.** China has been growing its spending on R&D by 17% a year over the past 20 years, a significantly larger growth rate than that of the United States. Chinese researchers publish more papers each year than U.S. researchers do, and China holds the most patent grants of any nation. In the U.S., the proportion of federal discretionary spending that goes to R&D has fallen dramatically in the past 20 years and has been largely stagnant since the mid-1970s. Some experts predict China will outpace the U.S. in total R&D spending within the next ten years. Prioritizing R&D investment is a clear necessity for securing our nation's global economic competitiveness and advancing economic opportunity and prosperity for all.

Faster scientific progress creates jobs, fuels our economy, and saves lives. Funding the RISE Act would preserve and protect our nation's research investments and repair the frayed career pipeline for the next generation of scientists.

Thank you for considering our views. We are deeply grateful for your service, and would also like to express our appreciation to Vice President Harris and your hard working staff members for their pivotal roles in advancing the best interests of our nation under your considered leadership.

Sincerely,