Scientists’ Role in Assuring Public Support for Research Funding

Mary Woolley, President, Research!America
Congressional Approval at All-Time Low of 9% — *New York Times/CBS News* poll (Oct. 25, 2011)
“I believe the economic destiny of America lies in science, technology, innovation and research.”

Research!America Chair and Former Congressman John Edward Porter, October 13, 2009
Research!America: 22 Years of Putting Research on the Public Agenda

• Non-profit alliance representing more than 125 million Americans
  • member organizations drawn from academia, business, patient organizations and scientific societies

• Distinguished, all-volunteer board
  • includes former elected and appointed officials, media and public relations leaders, and leaders from alliance member organizations
Mission

Make research to improve health a higher national priority

Research!America is an innovator in advocacy for research
Unsettled Climate for Science

- Top concerns: job creation, economic growth and competitiveness
- Will the supercommittee succeed?
- Election politics
- Health care issues are still front burner, especially cost issues
- Influence of the Tea Party
- Disregard of science by policy makers
- Scientists are not speaking out
Science in the News In Election Season: HPV, Climate Change, Stem Cell Research, Shrimp on a Treadmill; Referendum on “Personhood”
“I don’t think there’s any question, we ought to put a priority on research in this country ... One thing that I think the country expects is leadership in research because it has a huge leverage effect in our quality of life in what we can do in productivity.”

Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA), October 5, 2011
“The people we really listen to are the voters. Not once have I heard anyone at a public meeting ask me, ‘what are you doing for medical research?’ Not even from a researcher!"

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Appropriations Committee Member
“...public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.”

President Abraham Lincoln
Research!America Poll Data

- Commissioning public opinion polls on research issues for nearly 20 years:
  - National Polls
  - State-Based Polls
  - Issue-Specific Polls
- Telephone (random-digit dialing) polls are conducted with a sample size of 800-1000 adults (age 18+) and a maximum theoretical sampling error of +/- 3.5%. Data are demographically representative of adult U.S. residents (state or national).
- Online polls are conducted with a sample size of 1000-2000 adults and sampling error of +/- 3.1%. The data are weighted in two stages to ensure accurate representation of the U.S. adult population.
U.S. Competitive Edge in Innovation

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The U.S. is in danger of losing its global competitive edge in science, technology and innovation."

Source: Your Congress - Your Health Survey, March 2011
Charlton Research Company for Research!America
Most Agree That Basic Research is Necessary

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.”

Source: Your Congress - Your Health Survey, March 2011
Charlton Research Company for Research!America
The U.S. spends 5 and a half cents of each health dollar on research to prevent, cure and treat disease and disability. Do you think that is too much, the right amount or not enough?

Source: National Poll, May 2010
Charlton Research Company for Research!America
Many Not Well Informed on Elected Officials’ Positions on Research

How well informed would you say you are about the positions of your Senators and Representative when it comes to their support of medical, health and scientific research?

Source: Your Congress - Your Health Survey, March 2011
Charlton Research Company for Research!America
Your Candidates-Your Health for the 2012 Elections

- Outreach to candidates
  Candidates for federal office will be invited to participate by providing responses to a questionnaire about health, research and related issues

- Extensive public outreach through the Research!America advocacy network and sponsoring partners to encourage candidates for federal office to share their views

www.yourcandidatesyourhealth.org

Become a Fan on Facebook
Why Aren’t More Scientists Engaged in Public Outreach?

- Don’t have time
- Aren’t being asked
- Don’t know how
- “Involvement makes no difference”
- Apathy/don’t want to
- Lack of incentives
- “Non-scientists won’t understand”
- Liability/fear of being misinterpreted
- Happy with the job others are doing
Op-eds on Research: Ohio Examples

**Business Courier**
Ohio poised to compete in health care, research

**Vindy.com**
Ohio will compete nationally, globally in health care

**The Athens News**
Medical research: Good for Ohioans' health & economic health

**The Columbus Dispatch**

**Akron Beacon Journal**

**The Oxford Press**

**CantonRep.com**

**toledoBlade.com**
COMMENTARY
Medical research boosts Ohio's health, economy
Public Perceptions of Science and Scientists

Science’s impact on society is:
- Mostly positive: 84%
- Mostly negative: 6%
- Other/don’t know: 10%

Professions contributing “a lot to society’s well-being”:
- Members of military: 84%
- Teachers: 77%
- Scientists: 70%
- Medical doctors: 69%
And Yet, Despite High Levels of Public Confidence, Scientists are Invisible in Our Society...
How Many Americans Can Name a Living Scientist?

Can you name a living scientist? (first volunteered responses)
Most Americans Can’t Name a Living Scientist

Can you name a living scientist? (first volunteered responses)

- Yes: 34%
- No: 66%

- Stephen Hawking: 15%
- James Watson: 1%
- Jane Goodall: 1%
- Bill Nye: 1%
- Michio Kaku: 1%
- Neil Degrasse Tyson: 1%
- Other: 14%

Source: Your Congress - Your Health Survey, March 2011
Charlton Research Company for Research!America
Like elected representatives, scientists serve the public’s interest. That’s why the most important four words a researcher can say and convey are ...
“I work for you.”
“Everybody in the science and technology community who cares about the future of the world should be tithing 10 percent of his or her time to interacting with the public in the policy process.”

John P. Holdren, PhD
President Obama’s Science Adviser
Take Action Now

- Join our advocacy network for updates on how you can be involved in making research to improve health a higher national priority.

- http://capwiz.com/ram/home/

FEATURED ALERT

Where Do Your Candidates Stand on Health Research?

As the presidential campaigns heat up, it's time to find out where the candidates stand on health research issues. ResearchAmerica has launched our award-winning voter education initiative, Your Candidates—Your Health 2012. This initiative gets candidates on the record with their views on health research and displays their responses to a questionnaire on our website.

We need your help TODAY to reach out to the candidates and ask them to complete this short questionnaire. Health and medical research are critical issues for our nation, and we must know where candidates stand. Send a message to the campaigns right away. Together, we can put the spotlight on health research in the 2012 elections. Like this alert on Facebook, like our Facebook page and share it with your networks. ...
What Else Can You Do Right Now?

• Speak out about how research drives economic activity in every state and creates good jobs
• Volunteer as an adviser to your Member of Congress and/or a candidate
• Encourage and support public engagement and advocacy activities undertaken by fellow scientists
• Write an op-ed in your local paper
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