

May 2, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We, the undersigned organizations, all of which work to foster scientific discovery, were heartened by the news that you are beginning bipartisan negotiations to raise the Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 budget caps established under the Budget Control Act. We are writing to express our appreciation and support for your efforts, including the hard work of your respective staff members, as the negotiations get underway.

The threat these caps pose to federal science funding is not theoretical – cutting investment in science and engineering will have tangibly harmful effects across the government and on our national well-being. Funding for science and engineering research helps to spur innovative ways to meet Americans’ energy needs, more effectively protect against homeland security and cybersecurity threats, overcome diseases, pre-empt threats to our national food and antibiotic supplies, and advance other top priorities for the American people. Under-investing in science and engineering places our economy, public health and safety in serious jeopardy.

Federal investment in research and development (R&D) relative to GDP has markedly declined since the 1970s, dropping to less than 1% in FY2018.¹ In fact, while final numbers are not yet available, the National Science Board predicted that China would surpass the U.S. in R&D investment by year-end 2018.² We cannot afford to cede our place as a cutting-edge country when it comes to science and innovation. The stakes are too high.

The return on federal R&D investment, measured in quantitative or qualitative terms, dwarfs our current federal investment in it. To ensure the U.S. remains the premier R&D leader and

¹ <https://www.aaas.org/programs/r-d-budget-and-policy/historical-trends-federal-rd>

² <https://nsf.gov/nsb/sei/one-pagers/China-2018.pdf>

continues to be at the forefront of new technologies and discoveries that benefit us all, we urge Congress to act quickly to raise the budget caps and strengthen federal science funding.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Research!America
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.
American Geophysical Union
American Heart Association
American Institute of Physics
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG)
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC)
Elsevier
OSA-The Optical Society
Society for Neuroscience
SPIE