

March 28, 2014

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-309 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
2301 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah:

We write to urge you to include \$7.5 billion in funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the FY2015 Commerce, Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The future is now. A foundation and fundamental understanding of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is vitally important as we educate the next generation of leaders to compete in the global economy. Demand for highly educated and highly trained professionals in STEM and health care-related fields is at an all-time high. The U.S. must produce one million more STEM professionals in the next decade to keep up with workforce needs in growing STEM fields. Our nation is ranked 26th in math and 21st in science performance. We cannot afford to continue to fall further behind in STEM education.

The NSF is one of our country's most important workforce development initiatives and tools for economic competitiveness. The NSF is the only federal agency specifically responsible for supporting essential education and research across all science and engineering fields—a role that is vital to cultivating a workforce capable of keeping pace with global demand. Nearly one out of every four basic research projects at colleges and universities across the U.S. is supported by the NSF. The NSF awards the majority of its budget on a competitive basis to small groups of researchers at public and private institutions of higher learning through approximately 11,000 new grant awards per year.

Awards from the NSF help enable faculty and students to access the resources they need and support the necessary infrastructure and tools to address some of our society's most pressing concerns. Research funded by the NSF has led to discoveries as small as antifreeze proteins to those as large as new planets. In many cases, the basic research facilitated by the NSF is expanded upon and applied commercially by domestic companies benefiting the private sector and the U.S. economy. The applications of NSF research have helped many businesses create jobs by developing new products from advanced radar systems and next generation high definition videoconferencing to more efficient and affordable solar energy materials and genetically engineered tissues for medical procedures.

We must remain committed to strengthening our workforce and competing with countries that are investing significant resources in STEM education and innovation. We urge you support \$7.5 billion to fund the NSF to ensure that we continue to cultivate STEM talent so our nation remains globally competitive.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,