October 25, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) – a broad-based group of professional organizations, universities, scientific societies, and businesses – appreciates Congress’ continued support for the fundamental scientific research and educational programs supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). As Congress seeks to finalize fiscal year 2020 (FY20) appropriations legislation, we respectfully offer two recommendations. First, we urge Congress to complete the FY20 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill before the current continuing resolution expires on November 21. Second, we strongly urge Congress to make a significant funding increase for NSF a high priority.

We greatly appreciate the good work of both chambers to increase the government’s investment in NSF, and recognize that the House-passed mark of $8.6 billion would place NSF on the upward funding trajectory that it needs to continue U.S. leadership in science and technology. We request that Congress appropriate at least $8.6 billion for NSF in FY20. We respectfully suggest, however, that additional funds are needed to address the effects of years of underinvestment in the fundamental scientific research supported by NSF.

CNSF’s original appropriations request of $9 billion for NSF in FY20 sought to address the effects of years of underinvestment in the fundamental scientific research supported by NSF. Those unmet needs continue. A 2017 National Science Board report stated, “approximately $3.92 billion of cutting-edge research deemed very good or higher in NSF’s merit criteria was unfunded in FY 2017.” The U.S. is leaving potentially transformative scientific research on the table, just as our allies and adversaries are making significant investments. One effective way to combat this concern is to ensure that NSF receives the highest funding level feasible so that the agency can support as many of its strong proposals as possible. This will allow NSF to support national priorities such as artificial intelligence, quantum information sciences, and advanced manufacturing. Otherwise, instead of the U.S. leading in the 21st century, we will fall behind other nations who are pushing forward in these areas.

For the last 70 years, NSF has been an essential pillar of America’s scientific enterprise and is the only federal agency with the mission of supporting all the scientific disciplines. Research supported by the agency is vital to the public interest and essential if our country is to stay at the forefront of scientific progress and the cutting edge of technology and innovation. Now is the time for the U.S. to make a significant and robust investment in NSF.
Thank you for considering our views. We are grateful for your continuing support for NSF.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)

Acoustical Society of America  American Society of Civil Engineers
American Anthropological Association  American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Association for Dental Research  American Society of Plant Biologists
American Association of Geographers  American Sociological Association
American Association of Physicians in Medicine  American Statistical Association
American Association of Physics Teachers  Arafune Government Relations, LLC
American Astronomical Society  Archaeological Institute of America
American Chemical Society  Arizona State University
American Educational Research Association  Association for Psychological Science
American Geophysical Union  Association for Women in Mathematics
American Geosciences Institute  Association of American Medical Colleges
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering  Association of American Universities
American Institute of Biological Sciences  Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
American Institute of Physics  Association of Research Libraries
American Mathematical Society  Association of Science-Technology Centers
American Political Science Association  Bagley Group, LLC
American Psychological Association  Battelle
American Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  Biophysical Society
American Society for Microbiology  Boise State University
American Society of Agronomy  Bose Washington Partners, LLC
American Society of Civil Engineers  Boston University
American Society of Geographers  Brandeis University
American Statistical Association  Brown University
American Astronomical Society  California Institute of Technology
American Geophysical Union  Cavarocchi Ruscio Dennis Associates, LLC
American Geosciences Institute  Computing Research Association
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering  Consortium of Social Science Associations
American Institute of Physics  Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science Inc.
American Mathematical Society  Cornell University
American Philosophy Society  Council of Graduate Schools
American Phytopathological Society  Council on Governmental Relations
American Psychological Association  Council on Undergraduate Research
American Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  Crop Science Society of America
American Society for Microbiology  Duke University
American Society of Agronomy  Eastman
American Society of Civil Engineers  Ecological Society of America
American Society of Geographers  Entomological Society of America
American Statistical Association  Eversole Associates
American Astronomical Society  Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
American Geophysical Union  Florida State University
American Geosciences Institute  Geological Society of America
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering  George Mason University
American Institute of Physics  Georgetown University
American Mathematical Society  Georgia Institute of Technology
American Political Science Association  Harvard University
American Psychological Association  Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
American Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  IEEE-USA
American Society for Microbiology  Illinois Institute of Technology
American Society of Agronomy  Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology
American Society of Civil Engineers  Indiana University
American Society of Geographers  Knowledge Alliance
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