

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2004

Want to Ensure Economic Vitality & National Security? Invest in Science & Technology

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in signing the attached letter requesting that the VA-HUD subcommittee make the National Science Foundation (NSF) a priority as it deliberates the FY 2005 budget.

Advances in science and technology underpin our ability to meet many of the challenges that America faces today, including securing the homeland, preventing terrorism, fostering innovation and economic development, and educating our children to be able to compete in the knowledge-based, global economy. As a nation, we must continue to invest in our scientific enterprise.

Supporting the National Science Foundation (NSF) is key to maintaining our pre-eminence in science and technology. NSF investments are aimed at the frontiers of science and engineering, where advances in fundamental knowledge drive innovation, progress, and productivity. NSF supports the education of scientists and engineers as well as the workforce of tomorrow—a workforce in which all workers, from office assistants to rocket scientists, will require basic math and science skills.

We believe that the National Science Foundation (NSF) should be funded at the highest possible level in the FY 2005 budget, and hope that you will join us in asking for support.

To sign the letter, or for answers to any questions, please contact Ellen Burns in Rep. Ehlers' office (x53831) or Marty Sokoloski in Mr. Holt's office (x55801). Deadline for signatures is May 15, 2004.

Sincerely



Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress



Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Dear Chairman Walsh:

As supporters of fundamental scientific research and education, we are writing to urge you to make the National Science Foundation (NSF) a priority and fund it at the highest possible level in the Fiscal Year 2005 budget.

Congress recognized the importance of this investment by overwhelmingly passing the National Science Foundation Authorization Act (P.L. 107-368) which authorizes doubling the budget of NSF over five years. We realize that budget realities may not allow Congress to fund NSF at the FY 2005 authorized level of \$7.4 billion. However, we believe that significant increases in NSF's overall budget are warranted.

NSF funds all disciplines of science and engineering. It is the primary source of federal funding for non-medical basic research at colleges and universities. NSF-funded research has made tremendous contributions to our economic vitality and national security over the past 50 years. Internet browsers, microelectronics, lasers, communication systems and fiber optics, computer programs to predict weather, design buildings and direct pilots have all begun as NSF-funded projects. NSF plays a leading role in nanotechnology research, preserving the world's biocomplexity, and in developing new information technologies and cybersecurity methods.

NSF is also a key supporter of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education. It supports more than 200,000 students, teachers and researchers—essentially underwriting the development of the next generation of scientists, engineers, and technical workers.

Math and science education is an enormous and pressing need. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that new jobs requiring science, engineering and technical training will increase four times faster than the average national job growth rate. Workers will need a fundamental understanding of math, science and engineering as well as technical know-how to succeed. Unfortunately, a full third of our students are performing below basic levels on assessment tests in math and science areas. Now, more than ever, we must invest in our children to develop their talent, ensure their success and to develop the nation's full talent to maintain the quality of our workforce and our economic strength.

NSF has also been praised as a model of administrative efficiency—over 95% of its funds go directly to support education and research programs. NSF has accomplished its research and educational goals with only 4% of the total federal research and development budget.

We are mindful that you will be faced with very difficult choices this year. We respectfully request your support to fund NSF at the highest possible level--we cannot afford to sacrifice the research and education which current and future generations need to ensure their economic prosperity and domestic security.

Sincerely,

Cc: Ranking Member Mollohan