

May 19, 2015

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Johnson:

We, the undersigned American Nobel laureates in Physics, Chemistry, Medicine and Physiology, urge the House of Representatives to eliminate the separate appropriations authorizations for each directorate in the National Science Foundation when it considers H.R. 1806, The America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015. If the separate authorizations for each directorate are not eliminated, we urge the House to restore the budgets for the Geosciences and Social, Behavioral and Economic Directorates.

For the first time in the history of the National Science Foundation, H.R. 1806, as approved by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology establishes a separate appropriations authorization for each of the Foundation's directorates. The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$1.2 billion annually for the Foundation's Geosciences Directorate in the next two fiscal years, over \$100 million less than this year. The bill authorizes \$150 million annually for the Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Directorate in the next two fiscal years, which is \$100 million less than this year.

The allocation of funds among the Foundation's directorates requires a broad understanding of the scientific and engineering opportunities that hold the most promise of advancing scientific and technical knowledge and thus benefiting the nation. The Foundation's leadership and the scientific and technical experts who advise them are in the best position to make these allocations. The reductions in support for the geosciences and the social sciences contained in H.R. 1806 would discourage American scientists from undertaking basic research into important topics ranging from economic prosperity to national security. The proposed reductions differ from the preponderance of advice from experts, interfering with work that is vital to our future and harming scientific inquiry and our country.

We urge you to modify H.R. 1806 so that appropriations authorizations for each directorate in the National Science Foundation can be made by the Nation's scientists, rather than by Congressionally mandated appropriations authorizations. Should this effort fail, we urge you to support increasing the appropriations authorization levels allocated to the Geosciences and Social, Behavioral and Economic Directorates and act to preserve research strength in these important areas.

Respectfully submitted On behalf of 31 Nobel Laureates in the sciences,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. J. Roberts". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Sir Richard Roberts Ph.D., F.R.S.
1993 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine
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Peter Agre, *Chemistry, 2003*
Philip W. Anderson, *Physics, 1977*
Günter Blobel, *Medicine, 1999*
Thomas R. Cech, *Chemistry, 1989*
Martin Chalfie, *Chemistry, 2008*
Steven Chu, *Physics, 1997*
Robert F. Curl, Jr., *Chemistry, 1996*
Johann Deisenhofer, *Chemistry, 1988*
Andrew Z. Fire, *Medicine, 2006*
Edmond H. Fischer, *Medicine, 1992*
Walter Gilbert, *Chemistry, 1980*
Sheldon Glashow, *Physics, 1979*
John L. Hall, *Physics, 2005*
Dudley R. Herschbach, *Chemistry, 1986*
Roald Hoffmann, *Chemistry, 1981*
Roger D. Kornberg, *Chemistry, 2006*
Leon M. Lederman, *Physics, 1988*
Robert J. Lefkowitz, *Chemistry, 2012*
Anthony J. Leggett, *Physics, 2003*
John C. Mather, *Physics, 2006*
Craig C. Mello, *Medicine, 2006*
Mario J. Molina, *Chemistry, 1995*
H. David Politzer, *Physics, 2004*
Richard J. Roberts, *Medicine, 1993*
Randy W. Schekman, *Medicine, 2013*
Phillip A. Sharp, *Medicine, 1993*
Hamilton O. Smith, *Medicine, 1978*
Jack W. Szostak, *Medicine, 2009*
Arieh Warshel, *Chemistry, 2013*
Eric F. Wieschaus, *Medicine, 1995*
Frank Wilczek, *Physics, 2004*