



**Statement on *America COMPETES*  
*Reauthorization Act of 2015***

The Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) appreciates the opportunity to interact with majority and minority Committee staff, learn about the respective goals for reauthorizing programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), and express our hopes for a new America COMPETES bill. We share the goal of building a solid foundation for the future of science in this country.

The *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015* (H.R. 1806), introduced by the majority, addresses some of the concerns raised by the larger scientific community in last year's reauthorization bill, the FIRST Act, and we want to acknowledge the progress made. However, FABBS remains seriously concerned with some of the bill's remaining provisions. In its current form, FABBS strongly opposes the bill.

Two years ago, more than 130 organizations representing the science, engineering, higher education, and business communities called on Congress to craft legislation that would support investments in basic scientific research across all sciences. The *Guiding Principles* also urged Congress to support this research without forcing "detrimental tradeoffs" between fields of science. The new *America COMPETES* bill departs significantly from these principles.

FABBS recognizes the current budget challenges and the difficulty in authorizing funding for science programs within these constraints. To resolve this, however, the bill authorizes funding for NSF's research programs by individual Directorates and makes drastic cuts of 45% to the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate. Cutting any area of science in half will seriously undermine advances in knowledge. As in any scientific field, this lost ground can never be regained.

SBE research is critical to the national interest. These sciences provide fundamental knowledge about human behavior, from the individual to society. SBE science creates an evidence base to address the nation's pressing challenges from defending the nation to improving the health of our citizens to enhancing children's learning. Yet, funding for NSF's SBE Directorate amounts to less than 5% of the research supported by the agency. These severe cuts will starve important areas of research that benefit the nation. FABBS strongly opposes these cuts.

The America COMPETES legislation of 2007 and 2010 provided funding for all NSF research accounts as a whole, giving NSF the flexibility to set priorities based on the input of independent scientific experts, promising opportunities in science, and national needs. As funds shrink, this flexibility is necessary now more than ever.

Congress has both the authority and responsibility to build the nation's scientific infrastructure —across all areas of science. We hope Congress will take seriously the *Guiding Principles*, which unite the scientific and higher education communities. We welcome the opportunity to work together to produce a bill that the entire science and higher education community will support.

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*The Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) is a coalition of scientific societies that share an interest in advancing the sciences of mind, brain, and behavior.*