



TASK FORCE ON AMERICAN INNOVATION

Aerospace Industries Association
Agilent Technologies
Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Society for Engineering Education
American Statistical Association
Applied Materials, Inc.
ASME
Association for Computing Machinery
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of University Research Parks
Autodesk
The Babcock & Wilcox Company
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Business Roundtable
Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies
Computing Research Association
Computing Technology Industry Association
Council for Chemical Research
Council of Graduate Schools
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Cray Inc.
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National Center for Women & Information Technology
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Northrop Grumman Corp.
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SEMI
Semiconductor Industry Association
Semiconductor Research Corporation
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Southeastern Universities Research Association
TechAmerica
TechNet
Technology CEO Council
Telecommunications Industry Association
Texas Instruments Incorporated
The Science Coalition

March 31, 2014

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the members of the Task Force on American Innovation, an alliance of America's most innovative companies, leading research universities, and largest scientific societies, we are writing to express our strong concern with funding levels contained in the *Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology* (FIRST) Act (H.R. 4186), recently voted out of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee. The current version of the FIRST Act does not authorize adequate levels of investment in scientific research that are needed to close the nation's innovation deficit and sustain our global leadership position in science and innovation.

The Task Force is a strong advocate of strong investments in key federal agencies because of the critical importance of such investments to long-term economic growth and national prosperity. We have often expressed concern about the nation's fiscal challenges and made clear that the research funded by the federal government is essential to the economic growth we need to help address those challenges. The Task Force is particularly concerned by the funding levels included in the FIRST Act for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Under this legislation, funding for these agencies would not keep up with inflation or provide the investment in scientific research that this country needs.

The Task Force on American Innovation strongly supported the 2007 COMPETES Act, its reauthorization in 2010, and *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, the National Academies report that inspired the legislation. That is why the Task Force joined business and academic leaders and numerous other organizations in endorsing the [Guiding Principles for the America COMPETES Act Reauthorization](#) delivered to Capitol Hill in July of 2013. The FIRST Act, as currently written, falls short of these principles, and of the COMPETES Act itself.

The FIRST Act contains a number of other provisions that many Task Force members believe contradict or are inconsistent with the Guiding Principles referenced above. This letter focuses on research funding because that is our primary mission. We are not taking a specific collective position on other portions of the bill.

www.innovationtaskforce.org

This Task Force was initiated by technology companies ten years ago based on a recognition that (1) federal funding of basic research was critical to the nation's long-term economic strength and national security; (2) federal research spending, particularly in the non-biomedical arena, was seriously lagging behind the nation's investment needs; and (3) these things were occurring at a time when rising economies around the world in Europe and especially in Asia were beginning to pour resources into research funding in an effort to close the gap with the United States and eventually supplant our global leadership role.

A decade later, we have the very same concerns, except that they are magnified by the continuing erosion of federal support for research and the increasing speed at which other countries are developing their own scientific capacities. The FIRST Act in its current form does little to close our innovation deficit or address the competitiveness threat. We are eager to work with you and your Committee to amend the legislation to provide sufficient funding to help achieve those ends.

Sincerely,

Task Force on American Innovation

CC: Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology