We represent a coalition of student governments representing roughly 200,000 students at 26 universities across the United States. We are writing to highlight the criticality of science funding. Our nation has long been a leader in the world of innovation and research, and the federal government has played a key role in providing the funding for this research. This preeminence is being eclipsed due to the global competition. We would like to thank you for your work on H.R. 2225, the National Science Foundation for the Future Act (NSF4F), and S.1260, the United States Innovation and Competition Act (USICA).

As the representatives of graduate students, many of whom are either federally funded directly, or on federally funded grants, we believe that we are a constituency that is uniquely affected by these bills. We therefore urge the inclusion of the following provisions, currently found in these two bills, in any unified version of these two bills.

- **Expand the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP), NSF for the Future Act Section 5.d.2.** Currently the NSF GRFP accounts for 2,000 fellowships, with NSF4F expanding this to at least 3,000 and USICA expanding to 9,000. This style of funding allows graduate students the freedom to tackle the projects they want, find the best advisors for them, and take the risks often needed to conduct cutting edge research, so we favor expanding the number of fellowships to the maximum extent possible.

- **Include graduate students in mentoring practices, NSF for the Future Act Section 5.d.1.A.** Currently, NSF grant recipients have a set of best practices for mentoring postdoctoral researchers, such as mandated Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Under this section of the NSF for the Future Act, these provisions would be updated to include graduate students providing more consistent and higher quality mentorship for graduate students.

- **Address the graduate student mental health crisis, NSF for the Future Act Section 5.d.1.E.iv.** A study from the University of Berkeley found that 47% of PhD and 37% of Master students score as depressed, which is more than 6 times the national rate. These provisions help

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1. Signatories on this letter represent students at several R1 and R2, private, public, and land grant universities, reflecting the broad appeal of these ideas.
us understand the root causes of this mental health crisis and will help provide mechanisms to prevent another mental health crisis in the future.

- **Address sexual harassment in science.** The STEM fields have prenennially struggled with issues of sexual harassment predominately towards non-male members of the community, and this harassment has caused them to leave the STEM fields. This issue is something that needs to be addressed, as if we wish to be a nation with the best and brightest we cannot afford to foster an environment where more than half of the population does not feel welcomed.

- **Expand open access to federally funded scientific research, USICA Section 2527 b.2.B.iv.** One of the core tenets of scientific research is the ability to access the works of past scientists and build upon their work, however under the current status quo many researchers cannot afford to discover the shoulders of the giants they are supposed to be standing on. The taxpayer effectively pays twice for this research—once when funding it, and then again to access it. The provisions for open access to federally funded research articles under USICA would address this issue.

- **Study the feasibility and value of collecting new data as part of NCSES surveys.** The NSF for the Future Act requires the NSF to study the feasibility of collecting data that would shed a light on the state of the US technical workforce, including working conditions and work-life balance of PhD students, harassment and discrimination, sexual orientation and gender identity, immigration and emigration, etc.

- **Include the STEM Opportunities Act and the MSI STEM Achievement Act.** The STEM Opportunities Act and the MSI STEM Achievement Act passed by the House are crucial to ensure that we tap into the full scientific talent pool available to us in the United States.

- **Fund science at the highest possible level while balancing the basic and applied science portfolios.** As the bills currently stand, the topline budget of the USICA at $110 billion is the greater of the two. However the provisions in the NSF4F act are more specific in ensuring that basic science receives funding. The merger of these two bills in conference should have provisions that focus on the greater science ecosystem.

As the graduate student leaders of this country we urge the inclusion of the previously mentioned provisions in any finalized science funding bill. If you have any questions, or if there is anything we can assist you with, please reach out to Sven Burke at gsa-vpea@andrew.cmu.edu, or Benjamin Lane at bblane@mit.edu.

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On behalf of:

Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Assembly

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Case Western Reserve University Graduate Student Council
Cleveland State University Graduate and Professional Student Association
CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Graduate Student Council
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice Student Government
CUNY School of Public Health Graduate Student Government Association
Dartmouth College Graduate Student Council
Fordham University Graduate Student Association
Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis Graduate and Professional Student Government
Marywood University Graduate Student Council
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Graduate Student Council
New Jersey Institute of Technology Graduate Student Association
Northwestern University Chicago Graduate Student Association
Oklahoma State University Graduate and Professional Student Government Association
Purdue Graduate Student Government Executive Board
Rice University Graduate Student Association
Rutgers Graduate Student Association
Stony Brook University Graduate Student Organization
University of Miami Graduate Student Government Association
University of Michigan Rackham Student Government
University of Minnesota Professional Student Government
University of Northern Colorado Graduate Student Association
University of Oklahoma Graduate Student Senate
University of Pennsylvania Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
University of Rochester School of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering Graduate Student Association
University of Southern California Graduate Student Government
Washington State University Graduate and Professional Student Association
West Virginia University Graduate and Professional Student Senate

CC:
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate