



May 9th, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Murray, and Vice Chair Collins:

As a broad community of research organizations, professional societies, universities, and private companies, we recognize your tireless, dedicated efforts to address many competing priorities to ensure U.S. competitiveness, national security, a healthy citizenry, environmental resilience, and public safety. To that end, we write to urge you to provide the highest possible 302(b) allocation for the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittees in fiscal year (FY) 2025. Robust funding for the CJS portfolio directly supports competitiveness, safety, security, innovation, and resilience goals.

In FY24, CJS received a significant cut to its budget allocation, markedly more than other subcommittee allocations¹. We understand that many difficult decisions were required due to the Fiscal Responsibility Act budget caps and other variables. Instead of providing the necessary funds to ensure U.S. innovation continues to keep ahead of our closest foreign competitors, science agencies must make drastic cuts to critical research conducted across the country.

In FY25 a higher allocation must be provided to CJS to address urgent needs for CJS agencies, which are vital for addressing the challenges facing our nation, including protecting our national security; enhancing innovation, economic growth, and prosperity; ensuring our resilience; and promoting safety and justice. This work involves many agencies and programs, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the Census Bureau, the Department of Commerce statistical agencies, and the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs.

As the country's largest source of funding for basic research, the federal government has a unique role in supporting research and development (R&D) crucial for our competitiveness and keeping the United States at the forefront of innovations that improve our health, grow our economy, and enhance our quality of life. However, relative to GDP, federal spending on R&D is at its lowest point since 1953². Moreover, while the U.S. was once the uncontested leader in science and technology globally, we have

¹ <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committees-release-first-fy24-package>
² [Research and Development: U.S. Trends and International Comparisons. Science and Engineering Indicators Report, April 2022](#)

seen our competitive advantage erode as other nations have dramatically increased their investments in research. For example, between 2010 and 2019, R&D expenditures in China grew by approximately 11 percent annually, nearly double the rate of the U.S.³ China is also on a path to reach nearly double the number of STEM PhD graduates compared to the U.S. by 2025.⁴ The [Critical and Emerging Technologies List Update](#)⁵ updated in February of this year, highlights that the science agencies, including those funded in the CJS bill, should utilize these areas of research that “could chart new pathways in American innovation and strengthen national security.” If our country is to remain a leader in fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), space exploration, quantum science, and other critical areas, the nation must recommit to strong investments in research and technology, including CJS programs.

Congress passed the bipartisan CHIPS & Science Act in 2022, in which CJS agencies and programs figured prominently. The bill initiated new and expanded programs at the Department of Commerce and NSF to accelerate innovation and domestic manufacturing. However, these new initiatives are not sustainable at FY24 levels of funding. In addition, the level of funding provided to NASA in FY24 will limit the agency’s ability to maintain ongoing programs and announce new opportunities for critical space science and technology development. Given the scope and ambition of these efforts, significant additional appropriations for CJS are needed to fund these new initiatives while also supporting the growth of existing R&D programs that form the foundation of the U.S. research enterprise.

Investing in critical emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing, 5G, aerospace and cybersecurity is paramount for sustaining national competitiveness and ensuring future innovation. These technologies underpin advancements across various sectors, from healthcare and transportation to finance and defense. Robustly funding agencies like NIST, NSF, and NASA not only fosters groundbreaking research but also bolsters America's leadership in these domains. By supporting these agencies, the nation can cultivate a robust ecosystem of talent, infrastructure, and expertise necessary to address pressing challenges and seize opportunities in the rapidly evolving technological landscape. Even more importantly, strategic investments in these areas enhance national security and economic growth, positioning the United States to remain a world leader in the decades to come.

A robust CJS allocation in FY25 will allow the Department of Commerce to fund programs that are important to the future of the U.S. economy and society. The CHIPS & Science Act directed the Department to create regional technology hubs, which would further expand the geography of innovation, and expand manufacturing partnerships, but new funding is necessary to support this program. NIST received substantial funding in CHIPS for microelectronics programs but was additionally charged with new roles in critical technology initiatives, such as the Artificial Intelligence Executive Order, and is wrestling with almost \$1 billion in urgent infrastructure upkeep shortfalls. Programs such as the American Community Survey⁶ continue to collect high quality socioeconomic and demographic data that scientists and policymakers use to inform basic, clinical, and applied research and research training activities and activities to support the 2030 census are already underway.

CJS research programs also play an important role in advancing criminal justice. As our nation continues to struggle with violence, racism, and crime, research supported by DOJ, including the National Institute of Justice, provides important insights on a range of topics including the study of hate crimes, prison and sentencing reform policies, and policing strategies. These research programs provide vital data and reinforce other efforts across the government to address homelessness, school violence, racial prejudice, and other key societal challenges.

³ [U.S. and Global Research and Development. The State of U.S. Science and Engineering 2022. Science and Engineering Indicators, March 2024](#)

⁴ [China is a Determined and Formidable Competitor with the U.S. in Science & Technology, February 2023](#)

⁵ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Critical-and-Emerging-Technologies-List-2024-Update.pdf>

⁶ [American Community Survey](#)

In sum, we respectfully urge you and your colleagues to provide a robust CJS 302(b) allocation in fiscal year 2025 so Congress can make the R&D investments necessary to meet our nation's challenges and aspirations.

Sincerely,

Coalition for National Science Funding
The NIST Coalition
The Census Project
Coalition for Aerospace and Science
National Space Grant Alliance
Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Association
Sea Grant Association
Friends of NOAA

cc:

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Office of the House Minority Leader
Office of the Senate Majority Leader
Office of the Senate Minority Leader
House Committee on the Budget
Senate Committee on the Budget
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation