

April 17, 2006

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Senate Committee on Appropriations
110 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic (STEM) Education Coalition, we are writing to request an appropriation of \$6.02 billion in fiscal year 2007 for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and its research and education activities, the same level requested by the Administration.

We strongly support the mission of NSF's Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate and its efforts to foster improvements in K-12, undergraduate, graduate, continuing ed, vocational, and informal STEM education. We further request that, if possible, you devote additional funds to support the programs at the EHR Directorate from other agency portions of the subcommittee's allocation.

The STEM Education Coalition is composed of a diverse range of groups representing all sectors of the technological workforce – from knowledge workers, to educators and education researchers, to scientists, engineers, and technicians. Our Coalition works aggressively to raise awareness in Congress, the Administration, and other organizations about the critical role that STEM education plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century. We also support robust federal investments in basic scientific research to inspire current and future generations of young people to pursue careers in STEM fields.

While we recognize that these are tight budgetary times, a strong consensus is emerging in the business, education, and scientific communities that our nation's future competitiveness in the global marketplace is directly tied to the ability of our schools to prepare children for the technological economy of the 21st century. Innovative programs like the Math and Science Partnerships and other STEM education programs at the NSF need to be strengthened to meet this growing challenge. The MSP program at the National Science Foundation supports large-scale, innovative, and collaborative efforts among businesses, universities, and state and local education officials designed to improve our understanding of how students can more effectively learn math and science skills.

Our nation's future economic prosperity will depend in large measure on our ability to better educate our young people in math, science and engineering and to attract more of our best and brightest students into the STEM fields. We firmly support the robust funding of NSF's EHR Directorate and believe that funding for STEM education programs should be increased without diminishing essential support for the Foundation's research directorates.

If we can provide you any additional information on STEM education, please do not hesitate to contact James Brown at 202-872-6229 or Jodi Peterson at 703-312-9214.

AeA

American Association of Physicists in Medicine

American Association of Physics Teachers

American Chemical Society

American Geological Institute

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics

American Institute of Physics

American Society of Civil Engineers

ASME Center for Public Awareness

Association of Science-Technology Centers

ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America,

Engineers Without Borders--USA

Exploratorium

IEEE-USA

Institute of Food Technologists

International Technology Education Association

JETS

Johns Hopkins University

Museum of Science, Boston

National Association of Biology Teachers

National Center for Technological Literacy

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

National Education Knowledge Industry Association

National Science Teachers Association

Optical Society of America

Project Lead the Way

Science Companion

Society of Women Engineers

SPIE - The International Society for Optical Engineering

STEMES

TERC

The New England Council

Triangle Coalition