

February 9, 2021

Senator Bernie Sanders
Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee
290 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Graham, and Members of the Senate Budget Committee:

We are writing on behalf of the Science & Technology Action Committee, a group of non-profit, academic, foundation, and corporate leaders who have come together to advocate for a plan that would dramatically boost and strategically leverage our nation's investment and commitment to science and technology (S&T). We write to urge the Budget Committees to assume a pivotal role in accomplishing this objective. Specifically, we request that you establish an overall Fiscal Year 2022 discretionary funding level [302(a) allocation] that incorporates a budget increase of at least **\$35 billion** to be allocated across our nation's S&T agencies. In so doing, you would enable the first installment of an historic five-year doubling in federal S&T investment.

Our nation and populations around the world have witnessed the horrific power of a global pandemic to kill millions, shred economies and the businesses and jobs upon which they are built, compromise such basic touchstones as education for our young and care for our elderly, and drastically exacerbate racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic disparities at a staggering cost to individuals and society as a whole.

At the same time, we have seen a century of scientific discovery and technological development deployed to defeat COVID-19. Whether the focus is microbiology, vaccinology, genetics, diagnostic development, ventilation engineering, IT development and maintenance, or building the evidence base for effective public health interventions, S&T is not a discretionary asset against this or any other societal threat; it is an imperative.

Juxtaposed against this reality is the fact that the overall U.S. federal investment in S&T has stagnated, and drastically declined relative to GDP. **Such declines leave our nation vulnerable to a variety of emerging threats:**

- Public health challenges like pandemic preparedness and antibiotic resistance
- Manifestations of climate change and disruption
- Unmet obstacles to water, food and energy security
- Racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and gender-based inequities that disrupt the cohesion of our democracy and self-limit our nation's legacy of success built on diversity
- Domestic shortfalls in critical technologies vital for national security

Further, our nation's leadership and even our basic competitiveness in the global economic arena can no longer be taken for granted. In recent decades we have slipped to 10th in R&D as a share of GDP, and 14th in publicly supported R&D. Other nations are working methodically to bolster their science and technology capacity and talent, utilizing those strengths to create and capture new export markets, attract outside investment, grow jobs and manufacturing, fuel prosperity, and increase their international influence. In fact, China recently overtook the U.S. to become the #1 destination for foreign investment. We must invest in ourselves, and set our sights on assuring the U.S. and our planet not only survive, but thrive in the years ahead.

By elevating the Presidential Science Advisor to a cabinet level position, President Biden has executed one of the three key recommendations — [detailed in this plan](#) — that our committee has identified. We urge you to take the next critical step by building **at least \$35B** for new federal S&T spending into the FY22 302(a) allocation.

If the U.S. prioritizes and elevates science and technology as we envision, we can bring about a future that seems a world away from today's reality. We could be well-prepared for future pandemics, potentially heading off a novel infectious scourge. We could reverse the decline in life expectancy, a decline that began even before COVID-19 arrived. Alzheimer's could become history. Sustainable farming and crop production would serve people and the environment. Cleaner energy production could begin to meet the scale of need. Science is the U.S. government's best ally. Renewed investment, coupled with proactive efforts to innovate new solutions, can empower our nation to overcome threats to Americans and people across the globe.

Please call on any [member of the committee](#) if we can answer questions or be of assistance as you consider this request. Thank you and your staff for your vision, leadership, and public service during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Sudip Parikh, Co-Chair
CEO, AAAS



Mary Woolley, Co-Chair
President & CEO,
Research!America



Keith R. Yamamoto, Co-Chair
Vice Chancellor for Science
Policy & Strategy, UCSF