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New Report: American Workers, Science Experts Believe U.S. is Losing the Global Race for Science & Technology Leadership, Back National Strategy to Fuel Innovation

The Science & Technology Action Committee (STAC) report also delivers key policy recommendations for strengthening U.S. science and technology infrastructure

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 5, 2023) – According to the “State of Science in America” a comprehensive [Science & Technology Action Committee \(STAC\)](#) report released today, American workers across five key sectors have deep, bipartisan concerns about America’s science and technology leadership, support greater investments in science and technology funding, and overwhelmingly acknowledge the importance of science and technology in American society.

The report also delivers comprehensive insights from a range of science experts on the benefits of science and technology investments, the obstacles to advancing science and technology, and the serious challenges facing the U.S. as it engages in global competition. STAC is a nonpartisan group of [25 non-profit, academic, foundation, and corporate leaders](#) working to dramatically strengthen U.S. science and technology. The full report can be found [here](#).

“Throughout our nation’s history, federal support for science and technology has fueled many of the most transformative innovations that have helped the United States overcome its biggest challenges,” said Keith Yamamoto, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Strategy at UCSF and President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). **“As new threats to our national security and economy arise, strong federal leadership on science and technology is essential. This report demonstrates wide bipartisan support for a national science and technology strategy along with enhanced policy coordination and greater federal S&T funding to enhance U.S. long-term economic growth and national security while also strengthening the U.S.’s leadership role in addressing existential threats such as climate change, food and water security, and energy production.”**

Key Findings:

- **A majority of respondents across political ideologies and sectors agree that federal funding of science and technology is vital.** Nearly 70% of all respondents say government investment in science and technology

should be protected from budget cuts, including 86% of Democrats, 63% of independents, and 55% of Republicans.

- **The U.S. is perceived to be losing the race for global leadership in science and technology.** Over 75% of respondents believe the U.S. is losing or has already lost this critical competition, and 60% say China will be the leader within five years.
- **The federal government is viewed as the primary driver of U.S. science and technology advancements.** 41% of respondents said the federal government holds the primary responsibility for the strength of science and technology, compared to 23% for private companies, 22% for academic institutions, and 4% for non-profits.
- **The rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) is raising concern.** 39% of respondents believe AI will have a negative impact on society, 25% believe the impact will be positive, 25% believe the impact will be neutral, while 12% say they're not sure.
- **Most respondents find increasing distrust and politicization of science troubling.** Nearly 80% of respondents, including 91% of Democrats, 79% of independents, and 69% of Republicans, are concerned about the growing public distrust in science.
- **Respondents in every sector surveyed believe the top obstacle to future scientific advancement in the United States is the quality of K-12 STEM education.**

U.S. federal funding for science and technology is currently 0.7% of GDP, down from 1.9% in 1964. This decline contrasts sharply with increases by U.S. competitors such as China, which is [on track to overtake the U.S.](#) in science and technology investment by the end of the decade.

The “State of Science in America” report polled 1,981 working professionals and provides a snapshot of their perspective of the S&T enterprise. Americans working in health care, K-12 education, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), military/national security, and business were surveyed.

STAC developed the following policy recommendations based on the survey findings and expert insights gleaned from interviews with leaders in business, national security, academia, and science and technology:

- **Create a comprehensive, national strategy** for advancing science and technology innovation in the United States.
- **Foster additional coordination among the 20+ federal agencies** with scientific missions.

- **Increase federal funding for science and technology** from 0.7% to at least 1.4% of U.S. GDP in the next five years.
- **Bolster STEM education at all levels**, starting with K-12.
- **Ensure a diverse domestic STEM workforce** while also cultivating international talent.
- **Partner with other nations** — both allies and adversaries — on global challenges.

STAC's membership is made up of leaders across the science and technology enterprises. STAC is led by four Co-Chairs:

- **Bill Novelli**, Professor Emeritus and founder of the Business for Impact at Georgetown University and former CEO of AARP
- **Sudip Parikh**, CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Executive Publisher of the Science Family of Journals
- **Mary Woolley**, President and CEO, Research!America
- **Keith Yamamoto**, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Strategy at UCSF and President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

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About STAC: STAC is a nonpartisan, cross-sector group of advocates focused on advancing science and transportation across all U.S. disciplines and industries. *Learn more at sciencetechaction.org*