

October 25, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
SD-131 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter:

As you work toward finalizing appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008, the members of the Tapping America's Potential (TAP) coalition urge you to fund, to the greatest extent possible, science and engineering research programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Commerce, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education programs at NSF. Robust science and engineering research and improved STEM education are both vital to the future economic competitiveness of the United States and to the individual success of U.S. citizens in the global economy.

TAP is a coalition of 16 national business organizations dedicated to improving America's competitive position by supporting policies that will increase the innovation capacity of the United States. Since July 2005, the coalition has been taking action to reach the goal of doubling the number of U.S. STEM graduates by 2015.

TAP has consistently advocated the following three goals:

- **Strengthen K-12 math and science education** through improved teacher training in math and science; through increased support for the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program that provides scholarships for STEM undergraduate majors who agree to become K-12 math and science teachers; by increasing the number of teachers prepared to teach Advanced Placement and pre-International Baccalaureate college preparatory courses; and by expanding NSF's Mathematics and Science Partnership program.
- **Expand undergraduate and graduate science and engineering programs** through increased support for NSF's STEM Talent Expansion Program, which provides grants to universities to devise creative programs to recruit and graduate more undergraduate STEM majors.
- **Increase funding for basic research in the physical sciences** by significantly increasing funding for NSF and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

In light of these goals, TAP supports the following specific provisions of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bills:

Mathematics and Science Education Partnership (MSP) program at NSF: TAP urges adoption of the \$75 million allocation for MSP recommended in Senate Report 110-124.

Robert Noyce Scholarship program at NSF: TAP urges adoption of the \$46 million allocation for the Robert Noyce scholarship program recommended in House Report 110-240.

NSF Research and Related Activities: TAP urges adoption of the Senate-passed funding level, \$5,156 million.

NSF Education and Human Resources: TAP urges adoption of the Senate-passed funding level of \$850.6 million.

NIST Scientific and Technical Research and Services: TAP urges adoption of the Senate-passed funding level, \$502.1 million.

Thank you for your leadership in support of science and engineering research and STEM education. We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Susan Traiman,
Director, Education and Workforce Policy
Business Roundtable