

May 13, 2016

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Thornberry, and Ranking Member Smith:

The 77 undersigned scientific and professional societies, higher education associations, universities, and research institutions strongly urge you to oppose using the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), HR 4909, as the vehicle by which to reauthorize the Small Business Research Innovation (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

Although the SBIR and STTR are authorized through September of 2017, an effort is currently underway to renew these programs. Legislation containing controversial provisions that would divert funds from existing and important basic research programs at key research agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation has been approved by the House and Senate Small Business Committees but is still pending in the House Science Committee which also has jurisdiction over the SBIR/STTR programs. Given that the proposed legislation clearly will impact agencies and programs well beyond those overseen by the Department of Defense, it is inappropriate to address this issue in the NDAA.

As the attached letter notes, we support and encourage the participation of small businesses in scientific research and recognize that the SBIR and STTR programs are an important component of the innovation pipeline that produces today's medical and other advances. However, a mandatory increase in the SBIR/STTR allocation as proposed in the pending House and Senate bills will result in fewer research opportunities for investigators in colleges and universities, non-profit research institutes, and other dynamic research institutions. Located in nearly every district across the nation, researchers in these settings are the primary contributors to scientific progress. Their work is the cornerstone of the nation's research enterprise and makes the major discoveries that improve quality of life and contribute to our country's economic growth. Furthermore, the proposed increase in the SBIR/STTR set-aside would be implemented when future funding levels for the federal science agencies are very uncertain.

We do not believe it is the best interest of scientific advancement to redirect funds to one research program at the expense of other equally important national research priorities in the current environment. Reauthorization of the SBIR/STTR programs should be achieved through "regular order" – not through the FY 2017 NDAA.

Sincerely,

Addiction Medicine Foundation  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases  
American Association of Anatomists  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Immunologists  
American Brain Coalition  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Physiological Society  
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology  
American Society of Human Genetics  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Statistical Association  
Association for Surgical Education  
Association of Academic Physiatrists  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Anatomy Cell Biology Neurobiology Chairs  
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology  
Association of Independent Research Institutes  
Association of Medical and Graduate Departments of Biochemistry (AMGDB)  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers (APAHC)  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of Surgical Education  
Biophysical Society  
Brandeis University  
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center  
Coalition for the Life Sciences  
Columbia University  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Duke University  
Emory University  
Endocrine Society  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Genetics Society of America  
Indiana University  
Medical College of Wisconsin

National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research  
North Dakota State University  
NYU Langone Medical Center  
Penn State University  
Population Association of America  
Portland State University  
Society for Academic Continuing Medical Education  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
The Commonwealth Medical College  
Universities Research Association  
University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus  
University of Iowa Health Care  
University of Kansas  
University of Michigan  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburg  
University of Rochester  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Vanderbilt University  
Wake Forest University Medical Center  
Washington State University  
Washington University in St. Louis