

ASBMB Statement on President Donald Trump's FY2018 Budget Proposal

Benjamin Corb, director of public affairs for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, has provided the following statement in response to the proposal:

A \$6 billion cut to the National Institutes of Health is unacceptable to the scientific community and should be unacceptable to the American public as well. Trump's spending plan erases years' worth of bipartisan support for the NIH and the American biomedical research enterprise, which has long been the global leader for biomedical innovation. Cuts this deep threaten America's ability to remain a leader.

It is of grave concern to the research community that Trump's budget proposal – which would fund the agency at 15-year low – values investments in defense above all other federal expenditures.

Trump's budget fails to recognize the critical role that NIH research has played in saving the lives of millions of Americans suffering with disease as well as countless soldiers who are the beneficiaries of medical breakthroughs that started as research grants funded by the NIH.

In FY16, Congress increased funding at the NIH by \$2 billion. Last year, Congress – in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote – passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which provides additional funding for targeted research programs at the NIH. Furthermore, before the appropriations process broke down last summer, both the House and the Senate proposed more than \$1 billion in increased funding for the NIH.

A 2017 poll conducted by Research!America found that 80 percent of Americans believe it to be somewhat or very important for Trump to assign a high priority to health research and innovation. That same poll showed that 52 percent of Americans are willing to pay more in taxes if that increase goes solely to biomedical research.

Deep cuts like those proposed by the president, coupled with changes in immigration policy coming from the White House, threaten America's ability to continue to be the global leader of biomedical research and innovation into the future.

The bottom line is that Trump's budget is out of line with the needs of the nation's biomedical researchers and out of line with the views of the citizens he serves.

The ASBMB looks forward to continuing its bipartisan work with Congress. ASBMB will work to secure the agreed-upon increases in funding for the NIH for FY17 and to develop a reasonable plan for sustained investments in biomedical research beyond.