

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

Office of Public Affairs

Rockville, MD 20852 Fax: 301.881.2080

June 26, 2015

Contact: Benjamin Corb
240.283.6625 (office)
202.841.2701 (cell)
bcorb@asbmb.org

BIOCHEMISTRY SOCIETY STATEMENT ON HOUSE AND SENATE LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES FY16 APPROPRIATIONS

ROCKVILLE, MD – The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, an organization representing more than 12,000 scientists in the United States and globally, thanks U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Chairs Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Kentucky, and Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Mississippi, for their commitment to strengthening the nation’s scientific research and development capacities in fiscal 2016. The House LHHS bill would increase the FY16 National Institutes of Health budget to \$31.1 billion, while the Senate version would increase it to \$32 billion. The increased investment in the NIH would support advances in biomedical research and health care, while enhancing national competitiveness. Both bills have passed the full Appropriations committees and await action on the floor of their respective chambers.

While these increases would benefit researchers, the increases to the NIH budget come at the expense of other public health programs. “We applaud Congressional efforts to increase federal investments in the NIH and empower researchers to make critical breakthroughs,” said Benjamin Corb, public affairs director for the ASBMB. “However, the scientific community is concerned. With discretionary spending arbitrarily capped, increasing the budgets of some agencies means other agencies must be cut. The public health continuum, from basic biomedical research to patient care, only works when the entire pipeline is appropriately funded. Picking winners and losers like this satisfies the zero-sum style of budgeting but ultimately harms the health of all Americans.”

Said Corb, “Austerity measures are the biggest threats to sustaining scientific research. In one year, sequestration cut over 600 NIH grants and cost the jobs of 1,000 researchers. Continued adherence to arbitrary spending caps will hinder scientific progress and delay health benefits for all Americans. And there is a real possibility that the U.S. will lose its position as the global leader in biomedical research because of austerity measures.”

The ASBMB strongly urges Congress and the President to remove spending caps and sequestration altogether while finding a fiscally responsible mechanism that addresses our nation’s debt and deficit. Only then can policy makers build a foundation of sustained federal support for biomedical research and innovation.

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