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FEBRUARY 10, 2021

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY CALLS ON CONGRESS TO SUPPORT JUNIOR SCIENTISTS AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Rockville, MD – The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB), a scientific society representing nearly 12,000 mostly academic researchers, released a needs statement on today calling on the U.S. Congress to take action to support junior scientists whose training has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic response.

The pandemic — and resulting academic and industry laboratory shutdowns across the United States — has delayed training for the next generation of biomedical scientists who have had to slow or altogether halt their research because of laboratory shutdowns. These delays have affected junior scientists' ability to conduct their necessary research, publish their findings, and/or complete their degrees. All of these are critical steps in a successful career in science.

Many junior scientists' research is funded by the federal government. Given that the shutdowns have slowed their productivity and delayed their discoveries, taxpayers' investments in the scientific workforce and in lifesaving and life-improving research are imperiled.

The ASBMB is requesting that Congress pass legislation that sets aside an additional year of funding for federally supported researchers whose grants expired in 2020 or whose grants are set to expire in 2021. This bridge funding will allow those investigators to complete their important training and research projects.

“The ASBMB is particularly concerned about the pandemic's effects on vulnerable groups within the scientific workforce, such as early-career researchers, underrepresented minority scientists, and women scientists,” said Benjamin Corb, the society's public affairs director. “We are urging Congress to provide federal funds to ease the financial hardship of vulnerable early-career researchers specifically. The need for this sort of funding has been recognized by members Congress, as we've seen with the bipartisan introduction of the RISE Act and the Supporting Early Career Researchers Act. We hope lawmakers will consider language that will meet the needs we've identified in their final legislation.”

The ASBMB request can be found [here](#).

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