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BUDGET UPDATE

FY2006 Budget Resolution – House and Senate Action

On March 17, 2005, the House and Senate approved their respective FY2006 Budget Resolutions. The House version, which passed 218-214, stakes out a much leaner position on spending than the Senate version. The House provides for \$843.4 billion (the same as proposed in the President's budget) in total discretionary funds available to the Appropriations Committee.

The Senate increased the total discretionary funds available to the Appropriations Committee by \$5.4 billion after it adopted an amendment sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) to increase education spending by that same amount. In contrast to Senator Kennedy's amendment, Senator Arlen Specter's (R-PA) amendment (to provide an additional \$1.5 billion for NIH) did not increase the total discretionary funds available because the money was taken from the general administrative expenses account. Senator Kennedy's proposal was offset (paid for) by closing tax loopholes, resulting in an overall increase in total funds available. However, it should be noted that whatever figure is adopted as the eventual spending cap, appropriators would have the flexibility to parcel out the funds as they see fit and would not be bound to spend it on education programs.

FY2006 Budget Resolution – Conference

Congress returns from the two-week Easter/Passover recess on April 4, 2005. Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees will conference the two resolutions, which contain a number of key differences (in addition to the discretionary spending funding level), including the size of the tax cuts and the amount specified in Medicaid savings.

The White House and Republican leaders are planning to pull out all the stops to pass a budget resolution this year, which they failed to do last year, and to construct a filibuster-proof omnibus reconciliation bill.

Without successful adoption of a budget resolution, Republican leaders cannot use “reconciliation” procedures to expedite passage of tax and mandatory spending cuts.

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INSIDE (the Beltway) SCOOP – Jon Retzlaff, Legislative Director

It is becoming clearer by the day that Congressional staffers rely on and look to FASEB for its positions on scientific issues. For example, during our meeting with staff from the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, Joshua Sharfstein, M.D. (staffer to Representative Waxman) thanked FASEB for expressing concern about the process and criteria by which the Department of Health and Human Services selects and designates scientists as special consultants to the World Health Organization. Dr. Shafstein also remarked that FASEB’s [statement](#) against the removal of a scientist and ethicist from the President’s Council on Bioethics brought much needed attention to the issue. He also commented that Congressional Members and staff look to our organization to explain the science of stem cells.

Another example occurred during my meeting to discuss NIH reauthorization. Cheryl Yeager (staffer to Chairman Barton) remarked that the reason she requested a meeting with FASEB prior to beginning the process of drafting an NIH reauthorization bill was because she is well aware of our influence and importance to the scientific research enterprise.

Therefore, on behalf of FASEB’s Office of Public Affairs, I would like to take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge all of the FASEB Member Society scientists who currently are volunteering to serve on the numerous FASEB committees and subcommittees (including the FASEB Board, the Public Affairs Executive Committee (PAEC), and the Science Policy Committee (SPC), as well as the following Subcommittees of the SPC: Breakthroughs in Bioscience; Training & Career Opportunities; Animal Issues, Technology Transfer & Sharing Resources; Stem Cells & Somatic Cell Nuclear Transplant; OMB; Corporate Relations; Enhanced Public Access; and the NIH Issues Subcommittee). Your efforts are being recognized on Capitol Hill!

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FASEB MEETINGS ON THE HILL

FASEB President Meets Budget Chair, NIH Champions

As the House began its consideration of its FY 2006 Budget resolution, FASEB President Paul Kincade discussed NIH funding with Chairman of the House Budget Committee, Jim Nussle (R-IA), and NIH Champions, Congressmen Mark Foley (R-FL) and Jim Leach (R-IA). All three pledged to

keep NIH funding a top priority. From left to right, The Honorable Bob Michel, Dr. Paul Kincade (FASEB), Nussle, The Honorable Paul Rogers, Wendy Selig (American Cancer Society) and Claudia Louis (American Heart Association.)



House L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee Staff

On March 23, 2005, representatives from the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding, including Jon Retzlaff, FASEB's Director of Legislative

Relations, met with Sue Quantius, staffer to L/HHS Appropriations Chairman Ralph Regula (D-OH) and David Reich, staffer to L/HHS Appropriations Ranking Member David Obey (D-WI). Ms. Quantius and Mr. Reich commented that there appears to be a lack of energy on the part of Members of Congress regarding specific programs. It seems that Members are much more focused on projects for their respective district. We discussed the sliding success rates; they concurred it is not a strong argument. We also tried to emphasize the impact on young investigators. Ms. Quantius said that our most effective message (for advocating on behalf of increasing funding for NIH) is to focus on how human health has been improved (or potentially how it will improve through continued funding for NIH). Mr. Reich emphasized that NIH will not be able to get substantial increases until the overall budget situation improves.

House Government Reform and Oversight Committee Staff

On March 18, 2005, FASEB President Paul Kincade, and Jon Retzlaff, FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, met with Susie Schulte, staffer to Chairman Tom Davis, and Brian Cohen and Joshua Sharfstein, M.D., staffers to Ranking Member Henry Waxman (D-CA). FASEB's Office of Public Affairs initiated the meeting to speak to the Committee staff about the conflict of interest situation at the NIH and specifically, the December 3, 2004, letter from Chairman Davis and Ranking Minority Member Waxman (to NIH) requesting information regarding potential conflicts of interest of researchers who receive NIH grants and scientists who review grant proposals. The staffers noted that the gap between NIH researchers and NIH grantees is growing quite large (in terms of activities that are permitted such as consulting, accepting honorarium etc.). The staffers are asking whether this gap needs to be reduced. Dr. Kincade discussed the conference FASEB is organizing (titled, "Shared Responsibility, Individual Integrity: Scientists addressing conflict of interest in biomedical research.") to develop a consensus statement from the scientists' perspective that articulates overarching principles for the management of academia-industry-government interactions in biomedical research.

House Energy and Commerce Committee Staff

On March 31, 2005, Jon Retzlaff, FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, met with Cheryl Yeager, staffer to Chairman Joe Barton (R-TX), John Ford, staffer to Ranking Member John Dingell (D-MI) and John Sawyer, staffer to Representative Sherrod Brown (D-OH). The meeting was arranged at the request of Ms. Yeager. The staffers plan to begin drafting an NIH reauthorization bill and hope to introduce it sometime in May, 2005.

Ms. Yeager explained to me that Chairman Barton believes that the way the money is appropriated to NIH has a lot to do with how NIH is managed. Therefore, Chairman Barton is interested in restructuring the way the money is appropriated and has suggested that budget clusters be established. The Chairman believes that NIH's effectiveness would be improved by appropriating to groups of Institutes or specific disease areas rather than through the current arrangement (twenty-six separate Institutes receive an appropriation). Ms. Yeager said Mr. Barton believes that budget clusters would provide NIH with the kind of flexibility that is required to take advantage of scientific opportunities.

The staffers also remarked that they want to preserve the peer review system (at least the first level of review that occurs at the Center for Scientific Review). They remarked that the budget clusters idea might affect the second level of review (currently performed by the Institute's Advisory Councils).

Mr. Ford voiced strong frustration with the amount of report language that NIH receives from the appropriators each year. He said that his committee would be accused of earmarking if their bill contained the same language.

FASEB Meeting With Congressman Daniel Lipinski's Office

On March 18th, Gary Kline, FASEB Legislative Analyst and Ellen Weiss, Biophysical Society Public Affairs Manager met with Dr. John Ratliff, Legislative Director, for Congressman Daniel Lipinski (D-IL). Congressman Lipinski is a freshman legislator and sits on the House Science Committee.

During the discussion, Ms. Weiss and Mr. Kline congratulated Mr. Ratliff on Congressman Lipinski's membership on the science committee and presented him with the FASEB FY 2006 funding report. The two also explained FASEB's concern with the state of science funding, particularly as it relates to NIH and NSF. Dr. Ratliff asked Ms. Weiss about trends in funding for NIH and NSF and she replied that recently, NIH has received increases that fail to keep pace with inflation while NSF has had its budget cut. Mr. Kline followed up the meeting by sending Dr. Ratliff slides showing the trends on NIH and NSF funding.

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ADDITIONAL FASEB ACTIVITIES

FASEB Works With DeGette Castle on Stem Cell Bill

On March 25th, the *Washington Post* reported that during the current congressional session, the House Republican Leadership is going to allow a vote on HR. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005. This legislation would expand the number of stem cell lines available for federally funded research.

In anticipation of the pending vote, FASEB was contacted by the staff of Congressman Michael Castle (R-DE) and Diana DeGette (D-CO)—co-sponsors of HR 810—to help with advancing this legislation. The staff asked FASEB if it could provide a critique of claims made by Congressman Joe Pitts (R-PA) that “No diseases have been treated in animal models... using embryonic stem cells.” Dr. Carrie Wolinetz developed a one page statement refuting these claims and highlighting animal models of treatments that have come about from embryonic stem cell research (coming soon to www.faseb.org !)

The staff also is planning on holding a luncheon briefing for a select group of congressional staff on the issue of adult stem cells and their limitations. They have asked FASEB to provide a scientist for this event. Currently FASEB’s Office of Public Affairs is working with FASEB member societies to come up with a speaker.

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BILLS, BILLS, BILLS

H.R. 1357/S. 658 “The Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2005.”

On March 17, Representative Dave Weldon (R-FL) and Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) introduced, respectively, H.R. 1357 and S. 658, the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2005. The bills would prohibit both reproductive cloning and the use of cloning technology to derive stem cells. The Senate and House bills are similar, except that the Senate version of the bill would require a study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to assess whether new medical developments would require amendments to the bill. The Senate version of the bill is identical to the cloning bill which passed in the House of Representatives during the 108th Congress. H.R. 1357 has 103 cosponsors and was referred to the House Judiciary Committee. S. 658 has 28 cosponsors and was referred to the Senate HELP Committee. FASEB issued a [statement](#) reaffirming its support of SCNT and opposing the Brownback legislation.

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE & UPCOMING EVENTS

Senate L/HHS Appropriations Subc. Hearing on NIH's FY 2006 Budget

On April 6, 2005, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education (Senator Arlen Specter [R-PA], Chairman) will hold a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2006 NIH budget. Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director, NIH, will provide the NIH Overview, accompanied only by the Directors of the NCI, NIAID, and NIDDK.

The House and Senate will return from the Easter/Passover recess on April 4, 2005.

NIH Champion Award



FASEB President Paul Kincade presented the NIH Champion Award to Congressman Mark Foley (R-FL), Deputy Majority Whip, and Congressman Jim Leach (R-IA) as part of the Campaign for Medical Research. Foley and Leach led the effort last year on a Dear Colleague letter supportive of increased NIH funding.

Wendy Selig (American Cancer Society), Dr. Paul Kincade (FASEB), The Honorable Bob Michel, Foley, The Honorable Paul Rogers, Joe Carey (Society for Neuroscience) and Claudia Louis (American Heart Association.)

FASEB's Washington Update is brought to you bi-monthly by the FASEB Office of Public Affairs. We welcome your questions and comments – please contact Gary Kline, Legislative Analyst at gkline@faseb.org or (202) 543-1155. For more information about how to get involved in research advocacy, visit: <http://capwiz.com/faseb/home/>