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HOUSE FY2007 BUDGET RESOLUTION: Committee Action

The House Budget Committee marked-up its FY2007 budget resolution on March 29, 2006. The budget resolution includes an \$873 billion cap on discretionary spending, matching the President's request. Under the President's proposed budget, the FY2007 L/HHS Appropriations bill would face a \$4.2 billion cut from current levels and is \$7 billion below FY2005 levels.

Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) (who serves on both the Budget and L/HHS Appropriations Committees) offered an amendment similar to the Specter/Harkin amendment (which, as you remember, was accepted by the Senate during debate on its FY2007 budget resolution) to provide an additional \$7 billion for health and education programs, of which \$1 billion of that increase would be directed toward NIH. However, as expected (because all of the Republicans on the House Budget Committee are fiscal conservatives and are appointed by the House Leadership), all 22 of the Republican budget committee members opposed DeLauro's amendment. The amendment failed by a vote of 22-14.

The House Budget Committee also capped the amount of money that can be "advanced funded" in the appropriations bills. This is significant because the Specter-Harkin amendment provided an additional \$7 billion for health and education programs by raising the cap on "advanced funded appropriations." Therefore, by including such language in its budget resolution, the House Budget Committee, in effect, has taken steps to fight the Senate's decision to add \$7 billion for health and education programs.

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FASEB's House Budget Resolution Floor Strategy: FASEB's Alert

You may remember that the budget resolution sets annual spending caps for discretionary programs, including NIH. The spending caps determine what will be available to the Senate and House Appropriations subcommittees as they fund important agencies (such as NIH) in FY2007. Because of the uphill battle in the House Budget Committee, FASEB's strategy from the beginning was to focus its energy to support an effort by moderate Republicans to amend the budget resolution once it reaches the House floor (expected to occur next week).

Representative Michael Castle (R-DE) is leading an effort by moderate Republicans to defeat the FY2007 House Budget Resolution unless House leaders agree to increase discretionary spending for health and education programs. Therefore, on March 28, 2006, FASEB Society Member Colleagues received an e-mail requesting that they ask their respective Representative to support Representative Castle's initiative to allow the House to vote on increasing spending for vital health and education programs and to urge their Representative to oppose the House Budget Resolution if such additional funds are not provided. Please click on this [link](#) if you would like to take action on this important issue.

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

While the House of Representatives is expected to debate and vote on its version of the FY2007 budget resolution sometime next week, FASEB is actively supporting a group of moderate Republicans who have indicated that they will oppose the budget measure if party leaders do not increase funds for a range of domestic programs, including NIH. If the moderate Republicans vote against the budget bill it will likely fail because most (if not all) Democrats also oppose it.

The House Republican moderates are emboldened by the fact that 73 Senators also agreed that health and education programs require an additional \$7 billion. The moderate Republicans believe it is unacceptable that funding for 18 of the 19 NIH Institutes and Centers would be cut in FY2007 under the President's budget proposal.

These House moderates (a list which can be found below) deserve our thanks. If you reside in one of their districts, please take the time to express your appreciation for their participation in this important effort. By clicking on this [link](#) and typing in your zip code, you will be able to quickly send them a note of gratitude.

The following list of 23 moderate House Republican members signed a letter to Speaker Hastert (R-IL) urging "a modest 2 percent increase in non-security, non-emergency discretionary appropriations over Fiscal Year 2006":

Nancy Johnson (CT)
Fred Upton (MI)
Sherwood Boehlert (NY)
Jim Ramstad (MN)
Steven LaTourette (OH)
Jim Gerlach (PA)
Bob Ney (OH)
Ray LaHood (IL)
Jon Porter (NV)
Rick Renzi (AZ)
JoAnne Emerson (MO)
John M. McHugh (NY)
Ed Whitfield (KY)
Heather Wilson (NM)
John R. (Randy) Kuhl (NY)
Mike Castle (DE)
Rob Simmons (CT)
Joe Schwarz (MI)
Curt Weldon (PA)
Jim Leach (IA)
Todd Platts (PA)
Christopher Shays (CT)
Wayne Gilchrest (MD)

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FASEB'S MEETINGS

FASEB Meets with Dr. Zerhouni:

On March 22, 2006, FASEB's President, Bruce Bistrian, M.D., Ph.D., FASEB's President-Elect, Leo Furcht, M.D., FASEB's Director of Public Affairs, Howard Garrison, Ph.D., and FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, Jon Retzlaff, met with Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director, NIH, and members of his senior staff for seventy minutes. During the meeting, Drs. Bistrian and Furcht thanked Dr. Zerhouni for his recent aggressiveness when discussing the benefits of biomedical research and asked how FASEB might work with NIH to help carry the message forward. Dr. Zerhouni suggested the following:

1. Work with the other outside groups to ensure a consistent message.
2. Help Congressional Members, staff, and the public understand why research is important as well as outline the benefits that have accrued from the doubling. Note that Drs. Bistran and Furcht discussed FASEB's new ad hoc committee for documenting the benefits of investing in NIH.
3. Encourage our FASEB member colleagues to become more involved at the local level and take the initiative to educate city council members and local business leaders.

Dr. Zerhouni also asked FASEB to support him on his initiatives to protect new investigators and vigorously defend the peer review system against future expected congressional efforts to de-fund grants.

FASEB Meets with House L/HHS Appropriations Staffer:

On March 22, 2006, FASEB's President, Bruce Bistran, M.D., Ph.D., FASEB's President-Elect, Leo Furcht, M.D., and FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, Jon Retzlaff, met with Steve Crane, House L/HHS Appropriations Staff regarding the upcoming FY2007 appropriations process.

Mr. Crane informed us that the FY2007 L/HHS Subcommittee's allocation is going to be below last year's level. He said that it's going to be difficult to provide NIH with level funding in FY2007. He stated that NIH must emphasize translating the research discoveries into medical practice. He also expressed concern with the low compliance rate regarding NIH's public access policy. Drs. Bistran and Furcht informed Mr. Crane that FASEB is working with NIH on this issue.

FASEB Meets with Senator Coleman's staff regarding science funding:

On March 22, 2006, FASEB's President-Elect, Leo Furcht, M.D., FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, Jon Retzlaff, and FASEB's Legislative Analyst, Gary Kline, met with Rachel Gustafson, Health Legislative Assistant to Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN). Senator Coleman is a key Republican moderate and a strong supporter of science issues.

Dr. Furcht thanked Ms. Gustafson for Senator Coleman's support of medical research. He also made a strong case for increased federal investments in NIH by describing the impact that these funds have had on his institution-- the University of Minnesota.

Ms. Gustafson thanked Dr. Furcht and reiterated Senator Coleman's support for NIH. She also highlighted that Senator Coleman was a member of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus and the Congressional Medical Technology Caucus and indicated FASEB should consider working with these groups in their quest of support for NIH funding.

Ms. Gustafson was asked if Senator Coleman would be interested in participating in a local scientific briefing in Minnesota with medical research stakeholders. Ms.

Gustafson said that she would consider it, but recommended that we might want to consider a Capitol Hill briefing instead so that other Members of Congress could attend. Ms. Gustafson promised to work with FASEB to develop this briefing.

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UPCOMING HEARINGS

April 6 **House Appropriations NIH Overview Hearing:** The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education (Representative Ralph Regula [R-OH], Chairman) will hold its overview of the FY2007 President's Budget for NIH. Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director, NIH, will testify.

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

The Senate and House are in session. The next scheduled recess is April 10 through 23 for the Spring District work period, reconvening on April 24.

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