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HOUSE FY2007 BUDGET RESOLUTION

The leadership within the House of Representatives continues to struggle to convince a majority of its members to vote for the FY2007 budget resolution. If the House is unable to pass the FY2007 budget resolution, it would be the first time since the 1974 Budget Act that it will have failed to fulfill one of Congress' basic duties.

The Republican moderates remain the lone holdouts. These moderate members, who are led by Representative Mike Castle (R-DE), continue to call for an additional \$7 billion in funding for important health and education programs, including NIH. They understand that by agreeing to unrealistic discretionary funding caps, it provides them with little leverage during the appropriations process to protect priority programs, such as NIH and NSF.

On Wednesday, May 10, FASEB's Office of Public Affairs sent an [alert](#) to our FASEB society members who live and/or work in the districts of the House Republican moderates who have been supportive of the additional funds for health and education programs. The alert requested that they tell their representative to hold firm in supporting the additional \$7 billion, and vote against the budget resolution if it doesn't include these vital funds.

On Thursday, May 11, House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) announced that he was not going to bring the budget resolution up for a vote because he was unable to secure the votes of these moderate Members.

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HOUSE FY2007 APPROPRIATIONS ALLOCATIONS

On May 4, 2006, House Appropriations Chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) announced subcommittee allocations (commonly referred to as the 302b allocations) for each of the eleven House appropriations panels. On May 9, 2006, the House Appropriations Committee approved the allocations proposed by Chairman Lewis on a 35-27 vote.

Specifically, Chairman Lewis provided the L/HHS appropriations subcommittee with an allocation of \$141.9 billion, which is \$843 million more than the FY2006 enacted level and \$4.1 billion more than the President had initially requested. However, while this was a positive development, FASEB continues to remain quite concerned that the L/HHS subcommittee lacks the necessary resources to provide NIH with a respectable increase in FY2007. It's expected that most of the \$4.1 billion increase will be allocated to the numerous programs that the President had proposed to cut. In addition, it's expected that the L/HHS subcommittee will fund specific Member projects (earmarks) that may total close to one billion dollars.

Chairman Lewis provided the additional funds to the L/HHS Subcommittee (as well as smaller increases to Agriculture +\$500 million, Energy and Water +\$550 million and Science, State and Justice (funds NSF) +\$109 million) by reducing the Defense, Foreign Operations and Veteran's Administration accounts. Click on this [link](#) to see Chairman Lewis' breakdown of the FY 2007 subcommittee allocations.

On May 11, 2006, FASEB's Office of Public Affairs issued the following [press release](#) and called on Congress to provide the additional \$7 billion for important health and education programs that the Senate endorsed during debate on its budget resolution

Chairman Lewis has submitted a tentative schedule that calls for all appropriations bills to be passed by the House by the July 4th recess. The L/HHS bill, which provides funding for NIH, is scheduled to be marked-up in subcommittee the week of June 5th, with full committee mark-up the following week, and floor action occurring the week of June 19th.

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

While the L/HHS appropriations subcommittee's allocation in the House is not at the level recommended by the Senate, it is a tremendous improvement over what the President initially proposed. Chairman Lewis' decision to add an additional \$4 billion to fund important health and education programs is a clear indication that that the medical research community's message is being heard on Capitol Hill, and is a testament to the hard work and commitment exhibited by advocates and moderate Republicans.

This is the first time in my memory that the Republican moderates have been able to be so influential on a spending issue. Therefore, the entire medical research and education community (including FASEB society members), as well as Republican moderates, should feel a great sense of accomplishment.

Majority Leader Boehner has indicated that he plans to try again next week. While the entire exercise will become largely irrelevant next week (because appropriations bills can start hitting the House floor on May 15th with or without a budget resolution), it definitely puts House leaders on notice that they will face a challenge in finding a majority to support the L/HHS appropriations bill if total funding in the bill remains at FY2006 levels.

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FASEB MEETINGS

FASEB Meeting With Staff of House Science, State, Commerce and Justice Appropriations Subcommittee

On Thursday, May 4th, Jon Retzlaff, FASEB Director of Legislative Relations, and Gary Kline, FASEB Legislative Analyst, met with Michelle Burkett, Democratic staffer on the House Science, State, Commerce and Justice Appropriations Subcommittee (CSJ). This subcommittee funds the National Science Foundation (NSF) and NASA, among its numerous other programs. Ms. Burkett informed us that both CSJ Chairman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Ranking Member Alan Mollohan (D-WV) were supportive of providing NSF with the funding level proposed by President Bush in his FY 2007 budget request (\$6.4 billion). She said that this funding level would be contingent on an adequate 302(b) allocation. On Friday, May 5th, the 302(b) allocations were allotted and CSJ received a \$59.836 billion allocation which was +109 million or .02% above the President's FY 2007 budget request.

Given what Michelle noted, it would seem that NSF is in a good place to hopefully receive the funding level allocated in President Bush's budget request. She indicated that while both the Chairman and Ranking Member were committed to fully funding NSF, competition within the subcommittee could make things difficult. For example, the CSJ subcommittee must fill in a \$1.8 billion hole in the justice account for state and local law enforcement, replenish cuts proposed for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and increase funding for NASA.

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RECENT HEARINGS

Senate L/HHS Appropriations Hearing on HHS' FY2007 Budget

On May 3, 2006, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education (Senator Arlen Specter [R-PA], Chairman) held its overview of the FY2007 President's Budget for the Department of Health and Human Services, with Secretary Michael Leavitt testifying.

L/HHS Chairman Specter's Remarks:

Chairman Arlen Specter (R- PA) opened the hearing by stating that that he is very disturbed by the President's decision to reduce funding for the Department of Health and Human Services by \$1.6 billion in FY2007. He talked about the vital health and human services programs that will be affected by this "inadequate" budget and especially noted NIH's predicament. He said that NIH is the "Crown Jewel of the Federal Government" and asked how the President could cut funding for such an important and special agency. Senator Specter talked about the remarkable advances that are occurring every day because of NIH and said that NIH-supported research has helped him with his own personal health issues. He expressed concern about the number of grants that will not be funded by NIH in FY2007 if its budget remains flat. Sen. Specter also noted that he has talked to the President directly about what's happening to NIH's budget and asked Secretary Leavitt to convey the same concern to both the OMB Director and President. He informed Secretary Leavitt that the Administration, as well as HHS, must fundamentally reassess its priorities.

L/HHS Ranking Member Harkin's Remarks:

Ranking Member Tom Harkin (D- IA) stated that there is no stronger champion for NIH than Senator Specter. He said that the President's budget for HHS would be devastating if enacted, and resulted in 73 Senators going on record to support an additional \$7 billion for health and education programs. He also remarked that Congress did not intend for NIH's budget to reach a plateau once the doubling was completed. Senator Harkin said that they doubled NIH's budget because it was underfunded and because of the tremendous number of scientific opportunities that existed. He said that it doesn't make sense to double NIH's budget and then walk away from all of the additional opportunities that the doubling created.

Secretary Leavitt's Remarks re: NIH:

Secretary Leavitt said that he too is concerned about NIH's budget and worked hard to protect NIH in the President's "deficit reduction budget." He stated that Dr. Zerhouni has done an excellent job with encouraging trans-NIH Institute projects through his Roadmap Initiative. He also stated that NIH should dedicate a much higher percentage toward inter-Institute projects. He commented that it's a much more efficient way to fund research than to just appropriate to the individual Institutes. Therefore, Secretary Leavitt suggested that they work together (Congress, HHS and NIH) to create a mechanism to accelerate this process. He said that it would ensure more cross-cutting research and less "silo" research. He concluded by saying that the cross-cutting research is where we will find success in the future.

Senate Commerce, Science, Transportation Subcommittee holds FY 2007 NSF Budget Hearing

On Tuesday, May 2nd, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held a hearing to examine the FY 2007 budget request for the National Science Foundation. Committee Members present were: Senator Kay

Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), Senator John Sununu (R-NH), and Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL).

Witnesses included: Dr. Arden Bement (Director, National Science Foundation) Dr. Bement's testimony can be found [here](#). Dr. Warren E. Washington (Chairman, National Science Board) Dr. Washington's testimony is also [online](#). Dr. Alan Leshner (CEO, AAAS), whose testimony can be found [here](#). And finally, Dr. Jerome Odom, [testimony](#) (Professor of Chemistry and former Provost, University of South Carolina).

The theme of the hearing was whether or not NSF was fulfilling its mission to fund the best basic research and science education. Below are the highlights from the Members of Congress present at the hearing.

Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Chair of the Committee's Subcommittee on Science and Space, repeatedly questioned panelists, including NSF Director Dr. Arden Bement and AAAS CEO Alan Leshner on NSF's mission. Specifically, Hutchison was concerned with funding going to grants in the social sciences. She noted that if NSF is "going to be the engine that drives" the competitiveness issue in America, it has to focus on the basic science. Time after time she brought up examples of NSF funded grants that ranged from how U.S. legislators picked senators before the 17th amendment, to studies of divorce. She noted that with the tight fiscal climate we find ourselves in, should NSF be funding these social science issues. She also indicated that maybe we should reevaluate NSF's mission and think about putting social sciences somewhere else.

John Sununu (R- NH)

Committee member Senator John Sununu (R- NH) asked Dr. Bement which areas of basic research should we apply more resources. When Bement answered that he could not answer this question, Sununu became quite angry. He noted that it is troubling that he can't answer this question because as NSF Director he should be able to answer this question. He also noted that Bement has trouble answering that question but "has no problem defending research on political science topics". He indicated that NSF should not be funding neuroscience research; psychological research etc. because that is what NIH is for. He told Bement that he should be reluctant to be funding areas that are at the forefront of the NIH purview where they belong. He told Dr. Bement that NASA does space research, Department of Agriculture does agriculture research and NSF should be doing basic research, because that is "what you do." Sununu told Bement that "it is difficult to feel confident and comfortable in the direction you are taking NSF when its mission is so broad." Sununu also cautioned against using the economic impact argument with him. He noted that if you can show an economic impact statement with any type of research, the government should not be funding it because there are venture capitalists out there that can do it. Sununu also had problems with NSF funding

math and science, because as he said, that is what the Department of Education is doing.

Ted Stevens (R-AK)

Senator Ted Stevens (R-AL) was concerned with the amount of funding for education. He was also concerned about the lack of quality teachers who can teach math and science and create a "spark" that will get students interested in this subject. He was concerned that a great deal of money was going to people with PhDs for research, but not enough for K-12. He wants kids to get interested in science.

Bill Nelson (D-FL)

Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) was concerned that while we are spending money to get students interested in science, we are still lagging far behind countries such as India and China, which graduate many more scientists, engineers, and mathematicians than the U.S. Bement noted that these countries have chosen to focus on this area as priority investments and have decided to start educating them in these fields. Nelson noted his concern with the lack of funding for education programs at NSF.

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UPCOMING HEARINGS

May 19

Senate Appropriations NIH Overview Hearing

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education (Senator Arlen Specter [R-PA], 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 May 29 through June 2 for the Memorial Day District Work Period.

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