



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

March 10, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
United States of America

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear President Trump and Congressional Leaders:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities, an organization that includes 60 leading U.S. research universities, I urge you to use the opportunity of the uncompleted FY17 appropriations process and the beginning of the FY18 budget process to revitalize the federal government's scientific research and higher education investment strategy.

The Budget Control Act's (BCA) sequestration process and discretionary spending caps have been an inadequate and counterproductive substitute for the major budget agreement that is needed to address our nation's long-term fiscal issues. By placing much of the focus of deficit reduction on nondefense discretionary spending, the federal government has hampered its research and higher education investments that foster innovation and create new jobs, improve health, strengthen national security, and enhance the knowledge and skills of the U.S. workforce. This has occurred at the same time other nations have been rapidly increasing their research and higher education budgets. If these trends continue, the U.S. risks creating an innovation deficit and losing its status as the global innovation leader.

With budgets for two fiscal years under consideration, you have a unique opportunity to make bold moves to strengthen economic competitiveness and national security. For FY17, we urge you to avoid a year-long continuing resolution (CR) and complete the appropriations process by acting on key bipartisan decisions already made. For example, the House and Senate appropriations bills include funding increases for the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science and ARPA-E. The Senate Appropriations Committee proposes restoring the year-round Pell Grant, which would improve time to degree for more than a million low-income students.

Boston University
Brandeis University
Brown University
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Emory University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
Indiana University
Iowa State University
The Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
Michigan State University
New York University
Northwestern University
The Ohio State University
The Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rice University
Rutgers University – New Brunswick
Stanford University
Stony Brook University –
State University of New York
Texas A&M University
Tulane University
University at Buffalo –
State University of New York
The University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
The University of Chicago
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Florida
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
The University of Iowa
The University of Kansas
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri, Columbia
The University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
The University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
University of Virginia
University of Washington
The University of Wisconsin - Madison
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

Additionally, the House Appropriations Committee proposes vital funding increases for NASA's science, aeronautics, and space technology programs. All these proposed increases would help prevent an innovation deficit and maintain U.S. preeminence in innovation.

With respect to FY18, we are deeply distressed by the \$6 billion reduction from FY17 in the BCA-imposed discretionary spending caps. We are further concerned by news reports that the Administration is considering far more substantial cuts to nondefense discretionary spending.

Our nation faces difficult long-term fiscal issues, and the solution is not to reduce investments that help address them. The solution lies in reforming entitlement programs – where most spending occurs – and taxes in ways that control spending, spur economic growth, raise revenues, and protect the most vulnerable in our society. We urge you to negotiate increased discretionary spending caps for FY18 and beyond that will permit sufficient investment in scientific research, higher education, and other important programs that will build a better America and sustain our nation's global leadership.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Sue Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Sue Coleman
President

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees
Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees
Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
Members of the Senate Finance Committee