



## Lamar Alexander United States Senator • Tennessee

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### **Alexander: “Finish the Job” of Doubling Basic Research to Keep Americans’ “High Standard of Living”**

*Says “governing is about setting priorities,” reauthorization of America  
COMPETES legislation should double research, reduce waste and approve  
necessary programs*

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people in the world who work hard. They see we’ve got 22 percent of all the money in the  
world each year for just 5 percent of the people, and they want a bigger share.” – Lamar  
Alexander*

WASHINGTON, Nov. 6 – U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) today urged members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to “finish the job” Congress started in “an overwhelming, remarkable, bipartisan way in 2007 to double the budgets of basic research at major research institutions in the federal government.”

Testifying at the committee’s hearing on the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, Alexander said that “it’s hard to think of” a technological advance since World War II that hasn’t drawn some support from government-sponsored research – from the Internet to new technology that would make liquid fuel out of carbon from coal plants. He urged his fellow senators to advance three goals:

- Allow the Senate Appropriations Committee to double the federal government’s investment in basic research
- Reduce waste among duplicate programs
- Reauthorize necessary programs

“Governing is about setting priorities,” Alexander said. “There are a lot of other people in the world who have good brains. There are a lot of other people in the world who work hard. They see we’ve got 22 percent of all the money in the world each year for just 5 percent of the people, and they want a bigger share. So if we want to keep our high standard of living, I suggest that we finish the job.”

The America COMPETES Act was originally passed under President Bush, with the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate serving as lead cosponsors, both before and after the Senate switched from Republican to Democratic control, Alexander said. Ultimately the legislation's cosponsors included 38 Democrats, 30 Republicans and one Independent senator. Of the "overwhelming bipartisan support," Alexander said: "We'd never seen anything like it."

America COMPETES grew out of the "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report on American competitiveness, written by a commission headed by former Lockheed Martin Chairman and CEO Norm Augustine. The legislation set out to double the federal government's investment in basic research, including math, the physical sciences and engineering. That research is done at institutions including the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Science and Technology and the Office of Science. America COMPETES also created ARPA-E, an agency that supports research in energy technology.

Currently about 4 percent of the U.S. government's \$3.6 trillion budget goes toward government-sponsored research, which Alexander said is small compared to China investing 4 percent of its entire gross domestic product as it competes with other countries. Alexander said increasing research is important to ensuring that America continues to produce 22 percent of the world's gross domestic product, with a little less than 5 percent of the population.

Alexander said the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, as well as the full Senate, should ultimately authorize the Appropriations Committee to complete the doubling of that research. While doing so, the Senate should reauthorize necessary programs, Alexander said, and eliminate any duplication of programs, at a time when "we don't have any money to waste."

The senator provided several examples of technological advances that have allowed "our free enterprise system" to create America's high standard of living. One example outside of America COMPETES is DARPA, the military research agency that has funded research leading to the Internet, stealth technology, speech recognition technology and global positioning systems.

Alexander said a "cousin" of DARPA is ARPA-E, a research agency created under America COMPETES that has found a way to double the capacity of lithium-ion batteries for cars. It is also developing a method of creating liquid fuel from carbon dioxide, which would allow for the commercial use of waste from coal plants in the creation of new energy.

Alexander noted that it's "hard to think of an important technological advance" that has not involved some government-sponsored research since World War II.

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