

October 30, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McCarthy, McConnell, and Schumer:

As Congress seeks to finish remaining FY20 appropriations decisions, I write on behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an association of America's leading research universities, to urge final passage of FY20 appropriations bills before the current continuing resolution expires on November 21 and to avoid another harmful government shutdown. I also strongly encourage you to take important steps toward renewing the longstanding government-university partnership that supports our public health, national security, and economic competitiveness.

We are distressed by recent suggestions that final FY20 appropriations could be delayed until February or March of next year – five to six months into the fiscal year. Further delay would not serve taxpayers' interests and would hamper our nation's competitiveness. In the absence of final appropriations, federal agencies postpone research award decisions and prepare for potential lapses in funding. This slows the pace of research and innovation and creates unnecessary and costly administrative backlogs.

Congress has made progress in determining FY20 appropriations levels and now it is time to finish the job. Both the House and Senate bills have included important increases to federal investments in scientific research and student aid that would help bolster our nation's standing as the global innovation leader. For example, the House and Senate both propose increased funding for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the maximum Pell Grant award. Additionally, the House bills include proposals to increase funding for the Department of Education's student aid, graduate education, and Title VI international education programs; the Institute for Education Sciences; and NASA's Science and Space Technology programs; while the Senate's Defense appropriations bill includes increased investment in the Department of Defense's 6.1 basic research programs.

We urge you to complete FY20 appropriations without further delay and to approve the highest levels of funding proposed for research and student aid programs already included in the House and Senate bills. These proposed investments represent an important step in strengthening the federal government-university partnership that has helped secure our nation and made the U.S. the world's global innovation leader.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Sue Coleman".

Mary Sue Coleman, President

cc: Members of the House Appropriations Committee
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee