November 15, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Durbin, Chairman Visclosky, and Ranking Member Calvert:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the Association of American Universities (AAU), we write to thank you for your work on the FY2020 Defense appropriations bills. We echo the strong concerns that numerous members have voiced regarding the harm a further continuing resolution would have on our military men and women and defense enterprise and urge that the FY2020 appropriations process be completed expeditiously.

As the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees work to reconcile funding positions, we urge you to make research programs a top priority. Strong investments in defense research and development (R&D) programs are necessary to spur innovations that safeguard our military personnel and help the U.S. maintain international military leadership. APLU and AAU's members include more than 200 of our nation's top research universities, many of which have long histories of strong partnerships with the Department of Defense.

As members of the Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR), APLU and AAU share the Defense Science and Technology (S&T) priorities outlined in the Coalition's appropriations letter. As negotiations continue towards a final bill agreement, we respectfully submit the requests below for your consideration.

Provide $3,000,000 for the National Academies Science, Technology, and Security Roundtable
We are very supportive of the House-approved amendment to fund the National Academies Science, Technology, and Security Roundtable that would be established by the Securing American Science and Technology Act (SASTA). More than 100 universities, scientific

societies, and other organizations signed a [letter](#) of support endorsing SASTA when it was first introduced in the House, and APLU and AAU reiterated our support for this legislation in a [letter](#) to FY2020 NDAA conferees. Our member institutions are committed to strengthening the security around university research without sacrificing the open exchange of ideas and the spirit of collaboration that is required for the advancement of science. To do this effectively, improved coordination is needed between the federal intelligence, security, and science agencies, and the university community. The National Academies Science, Technology, and Security Roundtable would help to further this mission and **we urge the adoption of the House's recommended funding level of $3,000,000.**

Support at least $2,627,839,000 for 6.1 Defense Science & Technology (S&T) Programs
Defense S&T programs are essential to our national security and global military superiority. S&T programs support research that leads to the development of new weapons systems, defense capabilities, and warfare technologies.

Within the S&T account, APLU and AAU urge robust funding for the 6.1 Basic Research program. Discoveries from this program have led to paradigm shifts in military capabilities that continue to support and protect our military personnel today. For example, through a partnership with the Army Research Office, researchers at the University of Michigan and the University of Texas at Austin developed agile sensor technology that can detect, process, and transmit near-perfect optical images that automatically adapt to changing scenarios and environments. Today, this capability is crucial to DOD's mission of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

Tomorrow's military capabilities depend on the R&D investments we make today. Through partnerships with the research community, Department of Defense basic research is securing our nation's future military capabilities in areas such as quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and advanced autonomous systems. **We respectfully recommend the final Defense appropriations measure include at least the Senate's recommended funding level of $2,627,839,000 for the 6.1 Basic Research program.**

Support at least $3,527,921,000 for Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA)
Over the years, DARPA has played an essential role in funding high-risk, high-reward research which has led to many significant defense technologies, some of which have also evolved into remarkable civilian applications such as the internet, voice-recognition software, and GPS. As members work to allocate limited resources, cutting-edge national security research should remain a priority. **We recommend Congress provide DARPA at least the House level of $3,527,921,000 to fund the agency's extremely important work.**

We thank you for your consideration of these program funding recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact APLU's Assistant Vice President for Research Advocacy & Policy, [Deborah Altenburg](#), or AAU's Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations, [Hanan Saab](#), if we can be of any assistance as you work to finalize the FY2020 Defense Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Mary Sue Coleman
President
Association of American Universities

Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant
Universities

cc:
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby
House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger
Members of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense