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Carnegie Mellon University
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Cornell University
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Michigan State University
New York University

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The Pennsylvania State University
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Texas A&M University
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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

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Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis

Yale University

July 10, 2017

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 Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

As Congress turns its attention to the federal budget, I write on behalf of the Association of American Universities, an association of 60 leading public and private research universities in the United States, to urge you to work with leaders of the budget and appropriations committees to reach a bipartisan budget agreement to raise the FY18 defense and non-defense discretionary spending caps to permit sufficient investments in research, higher education, and other programs critical to our nation's security and prosperity.

For decades, federal investments in scientific research and higher education have paid enormous dividends in medical advancements, new technologies, and enhanced national security, and at the same time created entire new industries, new businesses, and high-paying jobs. We are concerned that the FY18 discretionary spending caps coupled with proposals to slash federal research and higher education programs would cripple our ability to do our part in generating economic growth and providing more jobs for Americans.

As the FY18 appropriations process moves forward, increasing the spending caps would allow for the resources needed to support robust investments in key research and higher education programs, such as: the National Institutes of Health (NIH); the National Science Foundation (NSF); the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science and Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E); Department of Defense (DOD) 6.1 basic research; NASA; and the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and the Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, Title VI International Education programs, Pell Grants, and other federal student aid programs.

While we are encouraged by the progress the House Appropriations Committee has already made to advance several subcommittee bills, we are troubled by the

proposal to eliminate funding for ARPA-E and very concerned about the stagnant funding levels for NSF, the DOE Office of Science, and DOD basic research programs.

For example, the Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee bill would cut NSF, a key pillar of America's research enterprise, to \$7.3 billion. This is \$133 million *less* than FY17. At this funding level, fewer research grants will be awarded, fewer students will be supported on fellowships and traineeships, and less funds will be available to support our country's deteriorating research infrastructure. In the same bill, NASA would receive a notable increase for its Science Mission Directorate, but the legislation includes cuts to other areas of research. During the CJS Subcommittee mark-up, several Members remarked about the importance of federally funded research, but lamented that without a bipartisan budget agreement, additional funding for NSF and other research agencies would be unlikely. This is distressing as other nations are increasing their investments in research thereby threatening the United States' standing as the global innovation leader.

After several years of sequestration cuts and declining federal investments in research and higher education programs, Congress took steps in FY16 and FY17 to begin reinvesting in these areas. As other countries seek to bolster their research and education investments, our nation must take additional steps to prevent an American innovation deficit. The current Budget Control Act FY18 discretionary spending caps are a significant retreat from sufficiently investing in our nation's future. Now is not the time to turn our backs on what has helped make our nation the greatest and most advanced economy in the world.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Sue Coleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Coleman" clearly legible.

Mary Sue Coleman
President
Association of American Universities

CC: Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees
Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees