



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU STATEMENT ON INTRODUCTION OF FIRST ACT

Following is a statement by the Association of American Universities on the FIRST Act, which was introduced today in the House of Representatives.

The original COMPETES Act established a vision for revitalizing the nation's research and innovation enterprise. The new FIRST Act does not live up to that vision.

The legislation fails to meet the [guiding principles](#) for reauthorization of the COMPETES Act endorsed last year by the business, scientific, and higher education communities. Among the most important of those principles is to set funding targets for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Standards and Technology that permit real growth for these agencies to stimulate long-term economic prosperity. The proposed legislation does not even keep pace with inflation for these agencies, whose work is critical to our future national competitiveness.

For this reason alone, the bill does little to close this nation's innovation deficit, but it also does some things to widen it, including significant funding cuts to social, behavioral and economic research. The social and behavioral sciences play a vital role in this nation's research portfolio. They contribute significantly to understanding and solving our nation's economic, health, and security challenges, and they increase the efficiency and efficacy of the cures, technologies, and discoveries made in other disciplines.

The bill also contains provisions that are duplicative and unnecessary, and others that add federal requirements and cost containment measures that would impede NSF's ability to perform its mission effectively. And while the language regarding public access to the results of federally funded research is improved, it remains problematic.

For all of these reasons, AAU opposes this legislation in its current form and encourages Members of Congress to vote against it unless substantial revisions are made. At the same time, we are eager to work with sponsors of the legislation to make changes that could make it a positive measure for research and innovation.

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The Association of American Universities is a nonprofit association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian preeminent public and private research universities. Founded in 1900, AAU focuses on national and institutional issues that are important to research-intensive universities, including funding for research, research and education policy, and graduate and undergraduate education.

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