

26 May 2006

The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert
Chair, Committee on Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Education and Research for Competitiveness Legislation

Dear Chairman Boehlert

On behalf of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States of America (IEEE-USA), I am writing to urge you and your colleagues on the Science Committee to support three critically important educational and research infrastructure improvement proposals: the Early Career Research Act (HR 5356); the Research for Competitiveness Act (HR 5357); and the Science and Mathematics Education for Competitiveness Act (HR 5358). By authorizing capacity-building grants and scholarships programs administered by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, these three bills will strengthen America's ability to innovate and compete in technology driven global markets.

IEEE-USA strongly supports Education for Competitiveness Act provisions intended to improve the quality of math and science teaching in grades K-12 and encourage more talented young Americans to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. By expanding NSF's K-12 Math and Science Partnerships; Robert Noyce Scholarships for Teachers; and STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Talent Expansion) programs, this legislation will boost technological literacy and increase the numbers of undergraduate STEM degree awards at US colleges and universities. The bill also includes an important new authorization for an NSF grants program to improve the quality of undergraduate education in STEM fields and directs the agency to spend 1.5% of its overall research budget on multi-disciplinary, graduate-level education and research.

Proposed authorizations in the Early Career Research Act and Research for Competitiveness Act provisions will enable the NSF and the Department of Energy to provide much-needed grant support to early career researchers, establish innovative new research programs in areas of special interest to industry and promote better integration of related education and research initiatives in science and engineering fields.

IEEE-USA intends to work with Science Committee members and with other concerned organizations to help develop the broad bi-partisan support that will be needed to ensure acceptance of this important legislation by the 109th Congress. For additional information about our views on innovation and competitiveness issues, please contact Bill Williams at (202) 785-0017, or at bill.williams@ieee.org.

Sincerely,



Ralph W. Wyndrum, Jr., Eng.Sc.D.
President, IEEE-USA

(Similar letter sent to all House Science Committee members)