

May 12, 2010

ENGINEERING SOCIETIES

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Chairman
House Science and Technology Committee
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ralph Hall
Ranking Member
House Science and Technology Committee
394 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gordon and Ranking Member Hall:

As leaders of the engineering community, we are writing to express our support for the full reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. The extension of this bipartisan legislation is fundamental to ensuring America's long-term economic competitiveness and our continued leadership in basic research and science and engineering education initiatives.

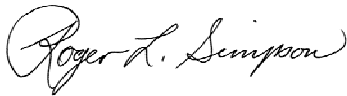
As you know, in August 2007, Congress passed – on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis - the America COMPETES Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-69). This law authorized increased funding for basic research and education areas critical to America's economic well being, energy security, and workforce competitiveness. Specifically, this bill targeted the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy Office of Science to receive increases to place these agencies on the path towards doubling in funding over time. Unfortunately, this important legislation was only authorized for three years, and with the growing number of obligations for Congress in the 111th Congress, the COMPETES Act is now in danger to expire without a reauthorization.

The America COMPETES Act also strengthens the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education pipeline by attracting the brightest young minds, including women and underrepresented minorities, into the STEM fields by devoting substantial resources to address a range of educational areas.

To remain globally competitive, the United States must invest in the research and development that underpins innovation. If history is any guide, we know the benefits of such an investment. According to economic experts, science-driven technology is responsible for over 50 percent of the growth of the U.S. economy during the last half century. Robust, sustained investment in research and development is required for stimulating growth in high-wage industries, for generating new technologies in critical areas of need, including energy, transportation and manufacturing, and for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

The historic challenges currently facing our nation will require proportionally historic solutions. To preserve this nation's global competitive edge and put America on a track for economic expansion, it is critical that Congress supports essential basic science research and STEM education initiatives by reauthorizing the America COMPETES Act. These investments are vital to ensuring our energy security and national competitiveness, meeting our environmental challenges, and producing innovative technological breakthroughs and new jobs that will fuel our economy well into the future.

Sincerely,



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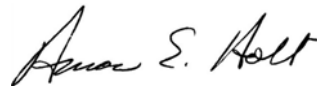
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Amos Holt, Ph.D.
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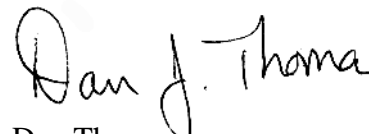
Thomas Sanders
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Dan Thoma
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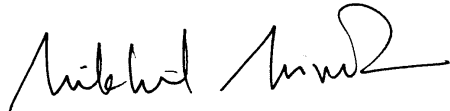
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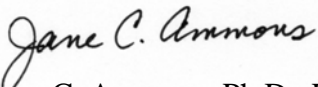
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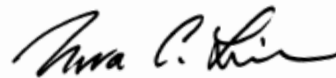
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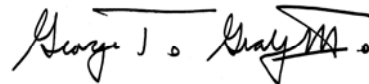
Carl B. Mack
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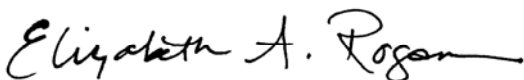
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