



June 3, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers and Ranking Members Lowey and Mikulski:

As Congress proceeds with setting federal spending priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) offers its recommendations related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs. Federally-supported programs important to women in science and engineering and young women who end up in these crucial fields are found across a number of agencies, and are funded via various spending bills, including both the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill and the Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill.

The Society of Women Engineers represents nearly 34,000 individual members across the world. Our organization advocates for public policies that promote equity in research and the classroom, foster excellence and access to quality opportunities in the workforce, and ensures that women and girls graduating high school and college graduates leave with the skills and knowledge that support success in their career and academic aspirations. As a member of the STEM Education Coalition, SWE concurs that in this economy every student needs to have a strong foundation in the STEM subjects in order to land and succeed in virtually any job – from the shop floor to the research lab to the boardroom. It is more evident than ever that high-paying jobs in the STEM fields must be filled substantially by women if we are to meet the country's economic goals. Enabling our students, particularly our women and girls, to compete in the global economy requires a strong federal commitment to improved teaching and learning in the STEM fields.

Therefore, we recommend and support the following for the FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill:

- Support the proposal of \$2.250 billion for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title II Supporting Effective Instruction State grants program at the Department of Education (ED). This program supports STEM-specific professional development and teacher leadership training.



- Support full funding of the ESSA Title IV Student Support and Academic Enhancement Grants at the authorized level of \$1.65 billion. The new initiative would support state-led efforts to promote hands on STEM learning, STEM specialty schools, integration of informal and formal STEM programs, and improvement in computer science instruction.
- Support the proposal of \$100 million for the new Computer Science for All Development Grants. Computer science related skills may play a significant role in closing the STEM education gap for girls, promoting equity and expanding learning opportunities in this critical job growth area.
- Support the proposal of \$10 million for a STEM Master Teacher Corps, authorized through Section 2245 of ESSA. This program would help cultivate teacher leaders in STEM subjects and promote the sharing of best practices across the teaching professions.
- Support the proposal of \$137.7 million for the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. As the office responsible for enforcing Title IX compliance, ensuring OCR is adequately staffed is of upmost importance to the pursuit of gender equity in education.
- Support the proposal of \$2.912 billion for the Child Care Development and Block Grant program to improve the quality and safety of infant and toddler care and provide adequate assistance to working mothers and young families seeking to stay in STEM fields.

We recommend and support the following for the FY2017 Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill:

- Support the proposal of \$952.86 million for the National Science Foundation's Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate. This funding supports discovery and innovation at the frontiers of STEM learning and teaching, supports the testing, assessment, study and evaluation of highly innovative models and approaches to learning, and fosters linkages between STEM education research and practice that improve the effectiveness of programs across the federal government and at the state level.
- Support Institutional Development programs such as the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement program and the Hispanic-Serving Institution STEM and Articulation program which support new and continuation grants for the improvement of science and engineering education at predominantly minority institutions, particularly benefitting minority women.
- SWE also supports the Senate Appropriations Committee's commitment to adequate investment in basic and applied research across the federal research agencies. While we are encouraged by the Senate's proposal to slightly increase funding for the National Science Foundation, we are also hopeful Congress will approve an investment of \$18 million for the Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers (ADVANCE) program.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you and look forward to working with you closely during the Appropriations process.



Respectfully,

Colleen Layman
President
Society of Women Engineers

Jessica Rannow
President Elect
Society of Women Engineers