



Member Societies

The American Physiological Society
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Society for Nutritional Sciences
The American Association of Immunologists
Biophysical Society
American Association of Anatomists
The Protein Society
The American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
American Society for Clinical Investigation
The Endocrine Society
The American Society of Human Genetics
Society for Developmental Biology
American Peptide Society
Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities
Society for the Study of Reproduction
Teratology Society
Radiation Research Society
Society for Gynecologic Investigation
Environmental Mutagen Society
International Society for Computational Biology
Association of American Physicians

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Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

----Quality Life Through Research----

This letter was sent to the Senate HELP Committee

October 18, 2005

The Honorable Richard Burr
Subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20519

Dear Chairman Burr:

On behalf of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), a coalition of 23 scientific societies representing more than 65,000 scientists, I am writing to express our reservations over your recent proposal to create the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Agency (BARDA). As the scientists who conduct the research that leads to the prevention and treatment of disease, whether naturally occurring or introduced in an act of bioterrorism, we are concerned that the National Biodefense Act of 2005 is moving to markup too quickly, prior to introduction of the bill, with no opportunity for the scientific community to comment.

While we understand and support efforts to protect the public against the threat of infectious diseases and bioterror agents, FASEB is troubled over the impact this new agency might have on existing programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control, particularly in an era of limited funding for domestic discretionary spending. NIH, and the dozens of universities and research institutions around the country where NIH-supported research is performed, already have the scientific expertise and research infrastructure in place to carry out the bioterrorism research that our nation needs. Our concern is that BARDA would duplicate, constrain or even eliminate these programs. Moreover, while implementing a 'top-down' approach to research, as described in the BARDA proposal, may be suitable for the manufacturing stage of development, we do not believe it is an appropriate substitute for hypothesis-driven basic research, which has historically led to the most important advances in biomedical science.

We are committed to working together with you and the Senate to ensure that research in the fight against bioterrorism gets planned, carried out, and implemented as expeditiously as possible. FASEB stands ready to be of assistance in developing legislation that would achieve your goal of strengthening our nation's preparedness for outbreaks of disease, while continuing our proud tradition of supporting the world's most innovative and productive medical research programs. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have additional questions or need more information. Dr. Carrie D. Wolinetz in FASEB's Office of Public Affairs will be delighted to assist you; she may be reached at (301) 634-7650 or cwolinetz@faseb.org. Thank you for your leadership in protecting our nation's health and for your attention to our views.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. Bistrian, M.D., Ph.D.
FASEB President