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FASEB SCIENTISTS COME TO CAPITOL HILL TO THANK NIH CHAMPIONS, URGE CONGRESS TO KEEP ITS PROMISE

Bethesda, MD – Prestigious scientists from throughout the nation will be descending upon Washington, DC, next week to meet with policymakers as part of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB) 2nd annual Capitol Hill Day. "We are maintaining the momentum that generated more than 15,000 letters to Congress on the FY2007 budget resolution," said Jon Retzlaff, FASEB Director of Legislative Relations. "We want to make sure members of Congress live up to their commitment to allocate additional funds to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other health and education programs."

Pivotal to the House passage of an additional \$7 billion to the budget resolution was Representative Mike Castle (R-DE), who helped organize moderate Republicans to support health and education programs. On June 6, FASEB will be awarding its Public Service Award to Representative Castle for his leadership in supporting medical research, in particular human embryonic stem cell research. "Congressman Castle's passion for helping patients stricken with diabetes, Parkinson's, spinal cord injuries or other serious illnesses is truly inspiring," stated FASEB President Bruce R. Bistran, MD, Ph.D. "FASEB wishes to recognize his tremendous leadership and tireless dedication in working for the health and well-being of the American people."

Over the course of two days, scientists from over a dozen states will be visiting with the offices of Congressional leaders, appropriators and other members of Congress who have expressed an interest in medical research, including: Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN); Senate Appropriations Chair Thad Cochran (R-MS); House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH); House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL); Senators Richard Burr (R-NC); Judd Gregg (R-NH); Richard Durbin (D-IL); Patty Murray (D-WA); Mike DeWine (R-OH); Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Barack Obama (D-IL); as well as Representatives Fred Upton (R-MI) and Ed Markey (D-MA). Prior to the meetings, the scientists will be briefed by former Chairman of the Labor-HHS Appropriations subcommittee, the Honorable John Porter. "We are prepared to answer the question, 'How has the nation benefited from our investment in NIH?'" Bistran went on. "And we are ready to explain the harmful effects we are already seeing from decreased funding – from loss of scientific talent to erosion of research progress."

"It is critical that members of Congress understand that NIH funds are being used by scientists within their own districts, at their local universities and hospitals, for life-saving medical research," contends Bistran. "Who better to send that message than the researchers who are behind NIH's successful history of medical advances?" According to Retzlaff, other topics on the agenda might include embryonic stem cell research, biodefense, and training of future biomedical researchers.

FASEB is composed of 22 societies with more than 84,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB's mission is to enhance the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB serves the interests of these scientists in those areas related to public policy, facilitates coalition activities among

Member Societies and disseminates information on biological research through scientific conferences and publications.