



December 22, 2005

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

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**STATEMENT OF FASEB PRESIDENT BRUCE R. BISTRAN, MD, PH.D ON FY 06 NIH
APPROPRIATIONS:
“DESTROYING HOPE FOR MILLIONS OF PATIENTS...DISPLACING OUR SCIENTIFIC
TALENT”**

Bethesda, MD – The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) is extremely disappointed with the 0.5% increase - approximately \$153 million – allocated to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the FY06 Labor-HHS appropriations bill. In a year that began with President George W. Bush declaring in his State of the Union, “Medical research can help us...by developing treatments and cures that save lives and help people overcome disabilities,” we now find ourselves confronted with the lowest percentage funding increase faced by NIH in over 30 years.

Americans overwhelmingly support medical research. Those who suffer from devastating conditions, from cancer to Alzheimer’s disease to diabetes, take comfort in knowing that NIH leads the world as the premier biomedical research entity, advancing the way towards scientific discovery and medical progress. Many of the 84,000 researchers of FASEB’s 22 member societies have dedicated their lives to investigating ways to prevent disease as well as to discover their causes, treatments, and cures. The funding level passed for NIH, together with the 1% across-the-board cut for discretionary spending and cost of medical research inflation, amounts to a cut for this vital agency, one that will hinder the process of translating research findings into medical practice, destroying hope for millions of patients.

FASEB would like to thank the L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee Members, especially Senate Chairman Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Ranking Member Tom Harkin (D-IA) and House Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH) and Ranking Member David Obey (D-WI), who sought to provide a higher funding level to prevent the erosion of our medical research enterprise in spite of receiving an overall L/HHS allocation that was \$1.4 billion below last year’s levels. These leaders recognized that our citizens want to keep that hope alive; they realized that the critical investment that Congress and the American people made in NIH by doubling its budget will be wasted by funding levels that fall significantly below the inflationary cost increase for conducting research.

The decay caused by sub-inflationary funding not only affects the health of our people, but our economy as well: 82% of NIH funding is awarded to more than 200,000 scientists and other research personnel affiliated with more than 3,100 institutions located in every state of the nation. The FY06 appropriation for NIH will ultimately mean that some of these labs will be forced to close, potentially displacing some of our greatest current and future scientific talent. Without our top researchers working on our most pressing health problems, our race towards finding new treatments will stumble to a trickle or even to a halt.

In a time when policymakers are struggling with urgent, competing priorities – war, hurricane recovery, expanding deficits – FASEB recognizes the difficult decisions they must make. But support of critical, lifesaving medical research is always a top priority for the American people. The FY06 appropriation for NIH falls far short of reflecting that priority. To help our citizens, we must do better.

For more about the NIH-sponsored medical advancements that are transforming people's lives, go to: <http://www.nih.gov/about/researchadvances.htm>

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. Visit our website: www.faseb.org