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Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

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FULFILL YOUR PROMISE TO NIH, FASEB TELLS CONGRESS FOLLOWING SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSAL FOR FLAT FUNDING

Bethesda, MD – “Today a promise has been broken. A promise that was made not only to members of Congress, but to the millions of Americans whom they represent,” stated Bruce Bistran, M.D., Ph.D., president of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). “FASEB is extremely disappointed in the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee’s decision to flat-fund the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for FY2007.”

“Many members of the House of Representatives voted for the budget resolution only because of assurances made to increase funding for health and education programs,” said Jon Retzlaff, FASEB Director of Legislative Relations. “The mark-up passed by the subcommittee fails to live up to those promises.”

According to Bistran, the NIH funding level, which will amount to a reduction after inflation, could have serious long term consequences. “There is nothing of higher priority to Americans than their health,” he said. “All of our progress in medicine – reduction in deaths from heart disease and cancer, increased longevity, victories against infectious diseases – is due to our investment in medical research. We have discovered new targets for drugs, gained new understanding into how diseases work, and created unprecedented scientific opportunities. Reneging on our commitment to NIH will send a message of despair to those currently suffering from devastating conditions and to the talented researchers who desperately wish to help them.”

FASEB is determined to work with members of the House and Senate through each subsequent step of the appropriations process, in an effort to repair the damage done by the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee, iterated Retzlaff. “Our researchers and clinicians spent the last two days meeting with many moderate Republican members to thank them for their stalwart support of NIH,” he said. “The message we received was that they are overwhelmingly in favor of medical research and the hope it provides to the citizens of their districts. Moreover, we were told that they will continue to hold their leadership accountable for the additional \$7 billion they committed to provide for health and education. FASEB has every intention of continuing to work with these champions to ensure that NIH is adequately funded.”

“We are getting close to reaping the seeds sown by our investment in NIH,” concluded Bistran. “Letting the fruits of medical research rot in the field, rather than providing the resources to harvest them, is a tragic and terrible waste. We will be left with less to offer those in need, and no seeds for the future. Congress vowed they would not let that happen. FASEB asks them to fulfill that promise.”

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.