FASEB PRAISES SUPPORT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH AND NIH IN CONFERENCE REPORT, PREPARES TO WORK WITH CONGRESS TO MOVE BILL FORWARD

Bethesda, MD – “Congress and the American people stand together today in their support for the health and well-being of our nation,” declared Robert E. Palazzo, Ph.D., President of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), referring to this morning’s conference of the Labor-HHS FY2008 appropriations bill. “By renewing our commitment to the National Institutes of Health, we are laying the foundation for the scientific discoveries that fuel medical advancement.”

The Labor-HHS conferees today agreed to a funding level of $30 billion for NIH, the nation’s premiere medical research agency. “We owe a debt of gratitude to Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Robert Byrd (D-WV), as well as Representatives David Obey (D-WI) and James Walsh (R-NY) for their extraordinary leadership in supporting medical research,” said Palazzo. “Clearly they recognize the critical importance of NIH-supported science to the future of our country’s health. NIH represents a beacon of hope to millions of people suffering from illness or injury without a treatment or cure.”

FASEB will now turn its attention to supporting the passage of the conference committee report and to encouraging a Presidential signature. “We will be calling on scientists from every state in the country to contact their members of Congress and President Bush,” said Jon Retzlaff, FASEB Director of Legislative Relations. “This bill is the first step in reversing the downward funding trend NIH has experienced in recent years and lawmakers need to know that today’s biomedical research and tomorrow’s therapies depend on passage of this legislation.”

“Today marks a victory for all of those afflicted with cancer, juvenile diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and the hundreds of other conditions for which NIH-funded scientists are seeking breakthrough treatments,” stated Palazzo. “But we are well aware there is still work to be done to make this proposal a reality. We stand ready to work with our champions in Congress to ensure that this bill passes with the votes needed to send a clear message to the President and the American people that nothing is more important than their health.”

FASEB is composed of 21 societies with more than 80,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB enhances the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB’s mission is to advance biological science through collaborative advocacy for research policies that promote scientific progress and education and lead to improvements in human health.