

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20502

January 30, 2018

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

In anticipation of this afternoon's hearing, we appreciate the opportunity to highlight important accomplishments in the first year of the bipartisan American Innovation and Competitiveness Act.

When S.3084 was signed into law just over a year ago, Chairman Thune commented, "This bill is a victory for science and economic competitiveness." Indeed it was, and we are fast seeing the fruits of that legislative effort.

Fast forward to today, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, along with the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Standards and Technology, have been working to fulfill this important law's requirements.

OSTP has updated the charters of the National Science and Technology Council's Physical Sciences Subcommittee and Subcommittee on International Issues to align to the priorities laid out in AICA. Conversations have been ongoing and both Subcommittees are slated to formally gather in the coming weeks. We believe that high-energy physics research, fusion research, radiation biology, and other physical sciences are poised for breakthroughs that have potential to transform our daily lives. Underscoring our interest in the physical sciences, we have appointed our first-ever Assistant Director for Quantum Information Science.

OSTP also values the important opportunities presented by international science and technology cooperation. The office looks to build upon recent successes in this regard, including the United States/United Kingdom S&T Partnership, the G7 Tech Ministerial, and the Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility/Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment project that boasts the participation of 30 countries a mile beneath South Dakota (which OSTP was delighted to participate in the groundbreaking in July).

OSTP has also been working to identify and reduce regulatory burdens while protecting the public interest. In close collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, the NSTC Research Business Models Working Group is currently finalizing a report required by AICA that examines centralized assurances database, research profile database, uniform grant application, uniform progress reporting, and strategies for additional activities. We look forward to sharing the findings with the Committee and Congress as we work to reduce burdens on researchers so they can focus on research instead of onerous paperwork.

Additionally, OSTP appreciates the Committee's revisions to the National Nanotechnology Initiative's (NNI) reporting and external review process that coordinated the National Nanotechnology Advisory Panel (NNAP) and National Academies' reviews to complementary rather than redundant and overlapping cycles. As a result of the streamlining of the reporting process, NNI now has sufficient time to respond to recommendations and to incorporate recommendations into the strategic planning process.

AICA also takes important steps to improve STEM education in the United States. STEM is an urgent priority for OSTP and the Trump Administration. In September, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum to boost investment in STEM Education and Computer Science, which was immediately matched by private industry. We look to continue the momentum as OSTP, in close collaboration with the NSF, is currently laying the groundwork for the Federal STEM 5-Year Strategic Plan, expected to be released this Fall. We have an exciting opportunity to make great strides in strengthening and improving Federal STEM activities to ensure younger generations of students have the tools they need to succeed in an ever-evolving workforce, and that the United States has the talent necessary to maintain our global leadership in science and technology. It is imperative that our citizens young and old have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to fill 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

We also take seriously our responsibilities to ensure diversity and inclusion in STEM fields. AICA's inclusion mandates have been incorporated into the NSTC's Broadening Participation Interagency Working Group, ensuring a single, clear NSTC focal point for efforts to improve diversity and inclusion. Students from all backgrounds, boys and girls in every community, should have access to strong STEM and computer science programs in order to succeed and achieve the American Dream.

OSTP looks forward to continuing to advance basic research and partnering with the private sector. As we highlighted in our FY 2019 Administration R&D Budget Priorities Memo, "Basic and early-stage applied research are critical components of the American research enterprise and the basis of new technological development and commercialization. ... (A)gencies should give priority to funding basic and early-stage applied research that, supplemented by private sector financing of later-stage R&D, can result in the development of transformative commercial products and services. Strong partnerships with the private sector will be critical to maximizing the efficacy of Federal funding. Furthermore, agencies should take advantage of innovation from the private sector, where possible, to adapt to Federal needs, rather than re-inventing solutions in parallel."

Ensuring and encouraging American innovation and competitiveness is critical to continued job growth and economic prosperity. The United States is the global leader in science and

technology, and with the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, we have the framework to continue to lead. OSTP appreciates the Committee's leadership, and welcomes our responsibility and role in advancing our nation's science and technology for the betterment of America.

Sincerely,



Ted M. Wackler  
Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant Director  
Office of Science and Technology Policy