STEM Education Coalition

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Senate Committee on Appropriations
502 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Senate Committee on Appropriations
110 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic (STEM) Education Coalition, we are writing in support of the Administration's request of $6.43 billion in fiscal year 2008 for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

We strongly support the mission of NSF's Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate and its efforts to foster improvements in K-12, undergraduate, graduate, continuing education, vocational, and informal STEM education. We also support robust federal investments in NSF's basic scientific research programs that will inspire current and future generations of young people to pursue careers in STEM fields and bolster our country's capacity for innovation and global economic competitiveness

We were very pleased that the Budget Resolution recently passed by the House provided an increase in budget authority for the NSF designed "to put NSF funding on a path toward doubling" and "to train more qualified science and math teachers," as specified in the Budget Committee's report. We echo this call and request that if additional resources are available, they be devoted to bolstering the programs of NSF's EHR Directorate without diminishing essential support for the Foundation's research directorates.

If we want our nation to remain competitive in the global economy and continue to be a world leader in innovation, it is critical that we renew our commitment to NSF's educational mission. The NSF's EHR Directorate promotes the development of a diverse and well-prepared workforce of scientists, technicians, engineers, mathematicians, and educators and a well-informed citizenry. The EHR Directorate also supports educational research, and infrastructure development in all STEM disciplines.

Innovative programs like the NSF's Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program need to be strengthened to meet this growing challenge. Thanks to the MSP program, student proficiency in math and science is increasing. An analysis of schools participating in the NSF MSP program shows significant improvements in students' mathematics and science proficiency. African-American, Hispanic, and white students showed significant improvements in elementary level mathematics, as did students designated as special-education or as limited English-proficiency students. One large group of high school students who participated in the MSP program showed a 17 percent improvement in math proficiency in just two years.

The STEM Education Coalition is composed of a diverse range of groups representing all sectors of the technological workforce – from knowledge workers, to educators and education researchers, to scientists, engineers, and technicians. Our Coalition works to raise awareness in Congress, the Administration, and other organizations about the critical role that STEM education plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century.

If we can provide you any additional information on STEM education, please do not hesitate to contact James Brown at 202-872-6229 or Jodi Peterson at 703-312-9214.

Sincerely,

Acoustical Society of America
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of University Women
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Institute of Physics
American Nuclear Society
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers
ASME Center for Public Awareness
ASTRA – The Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America
Business Higher Education Forum
The Campaign for Environmental Literacy
The Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Computing Research Association
Education Development Center (EDC)
Exploratorium
Hands on Science Partnership
Institute of Food Technologists
ITEA – International Technology Education Association
Knowledge Alliance (formerly NEKIA)
Museum of Science – Boston
National Center for Technological Literacy
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Science Teachers Association
The New England Council
The Ohio Academy of Science
Ohio Technology Education Association
Optical Society of America
Project Lead the Way
SAE International
Society of Women Engineers
SPIE – The International Society for Optical Engineering
University of Kansas