



March 17, 2006

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), I am writing to thank you for your willingness to engage in discussions on the importance of innovation and research in sustaining a strong American economy. AAAS believes that, in order to keep the United States at the forefront of technological development and economic growth, it is necessary to:

- Enhance budgets for fundamental and multidisciplinary research across multiple agencies
- Invest in a better-prepared, better-educated domestic workforce
- Improve accessibility and receptivity to international students, scientists, and engineers
- Create and expand incentives for innovation

AAAS sees impressive signs of collaboration between the branches of government and across party lines on this challenge. It is encouraging to see that leaders from disparate regions, parties, and branches of government recognize the importance of innovation.

A concerted effort will be needed, as I am sure you recognize, to bring the many programmatic elements outlined in the various bills before Congress to fruition in a consensus bill that can be enacted this term. Our AAAS theme this year is “Grand Challenges and Great Opportunities”; one of our priorities is for the country to take significant actions to strengthen our economic future.

Many thanks, again, for your consideration of these important issues. AAAS, the nation's largest general scientific organization, representing 127,000 members directly and about 10 million scientists and engineers through our affiliates, stands ready to assist.

Sincerely yours,

Gilbert S. Omenn
Chairman of the Board, AAAS