



October 19, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Durbin and Visclosky:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I thank you and your Congressional colleagues for passing the September short-term continuing resolution, providing a path forward for fiscal year 2017 appropriations action before the end of this year. We urge Congress to complete the FY 2017 appropriations process this fall and to send the President bipartisan funding legislation by the end of the calendar year.

As the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees work to reconcile your positions on funding for FY 2017, I strongly encourage you to make research and higher education programs a top priority. Defense scientific research conducted by colleges and universities has helped create many of the military technologies used on the battlefield today, and these investments continue to demonstrate a significant return, growing our economy and improving the health and well-being of our society. Below, I reiterate APLU's funding requests for FY 2017 in the Defense appropriations bill.

It is critical to our national security that the U.S. military maintain its technical and scientific superiority. Strong, sustained investment in defense scientific research will help spur the discoveries needed to develop the battlefield technology and capabilities of tomorrow. This is why APLU recommends funding of **\$13.422 billion in FY 2017 for the Department of Defense (DoD) Science and Technology (S&T)** account, covering 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 research and development. Although we strongly recommend our requested increase for S&T, we prefer the Senate's proposed funding level of \$13.364 billion over the almost \$200 million reduction from FY 2016 included in the House proposal.

We urge you to fund **DoD basic research (6.1) at \$2.532 billion in FY 2017**, an increase of 9.6 percent over FY 2016. We are concerned that both House and Senate bills propose funding levels for defense basic research below FY 2016 levels. As countries like China continue to grow their investments in defense research, we must support basic scientific research to enable discoveries and innovations that will provide the necessary military capabilities of tomorrow, and help offset any technological innovations made by potential rival nations. Funding DoD basic research at \$2.532 billion for FY 2017 will help ensure the U.S. maintains its global military superiority.

We appreciate that both the House and Senate bills propose funding increases over FY 2016 for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). We encourage you to **fund DARPA at \$2.973 billion in FY 2017**, and no less than the House proposed level of \$2.923 billion. DARPA has played an important role in funding high-risk, high-reward research which has led to many significant defense technologies, some of which have also evolved into remarkable civilian applications, such as GPS.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and recommendations. Though there are some decisions made in the FY 2017 appropriations bills thus far that we oppose, we strongly believe that the FY 2017 funding process should be completed this year. We urge the 114th Congress to send the President bipartisan appropriations legislation that prioritizes important investments in higher education and research before the end of the year. Please consider APLU a resource as you work to finalize FY 2017 appropriations.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
APLU

cc: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader Harry Reid
Speaker Paul Ryan
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Barbara Mikulski
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense