House to Consider $47 Billion for NIH

The House Appropriations Committee has passed funding bills that would provide NIH with a total of $47 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and NSF with $8.55 billion. Five billion of NIH’s total budget is for emergency funding which may be used to offset costs related to disruptions in research activity due to new coronavirus pandemic.

In addition, ASHG endorsed the Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act (RISE) Act, introduced by Reps. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Fred Upton (R-MI) and colleagues last month. The legislation authorizes $26 billion in supplemental funding for federal research agencies including the NIH to offset disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Register for the New ASHG Advocacy Webinar!

Virtual Advocacy: Engaging Congress On Genetics and Genomics
ASHG Webinar: Wednesday, July 22, 1:30-2 PM Eastern

Wednesday, July 22 at 1:30 pm Eastern
Join us for the second webinar in the ASHG advocacy series, “How to Become an ASHG Advocate.” Recording of the first advocacy webinar, “The Need for Science Advocacy and How to
Get Started" is available.

What to expect:

- Learn the different ways to engage with elected officials virtually.
- How to frame your story and advocate for genetics and genomics research.

Speakers:

- Erin Heath MSc, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- Katrina Goddard, PhD, Kaiser Permanente, Moderator

Register

ASHG Supports International Scientists Contributing to Research in the U.S.

ASHG opposes the new Executive Order imposing restrictions on visas commonly used by by early-career international scientists to study and advance research in the United States. ASHG also released a statement opposing the new Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) policy on online learning by international students attending U.S. universities. “ASHG is deeply committed to a diverse and inclusive research workforce and honors those who come to U.S. labs from across the world to contribute to genetics and genomics advances in this country,” said ASHG President Anthony Wynshaw-Boris, MD, PhD. Yesterday afternoon, the Administration rescinded ICE’s new policy.

Canada's Supreme Court Upholds Genetic Non-Discrimination Law

Last week, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a genetic non-discrimination law is constitutional. The Genetic Non-Discrimination Act, passed in 2017, protected individuals from being forced to undergo genetic testing or share results as a condition of employment or buying insurance. ASHG advocated for its passage and Canadian members were especially influential. ASHG awarded the 2016 Advocacy Award to chief bill sponsor Senator James Cowan and the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (pictured left).

In Other News

- Florida passed a new genetic privacy law that would prohibit life, long-term care, and
disability insurance companies from using genetic information in coverage decisions. The law takes effect beginning of this month.

- NIH has issued a new guidance for grantees relating to administrative flexibilities for COVID-19 related impacts.
- The JASON science advisory group released a report outlining recommendations for universities labs resuming research during COVID-19.
- Recordings of the ELSI Virtual Forum, June 15-16, are now available.