

# ASHG

American Society of Human Genetics  
ADVOCATE UPDATE

## Senate Passes U.S. Competition & Innovation Act



Last week, the Senate passed a bill, the [U.S. Innovation and Competition Act \(USICA\)](#), aimed at addressing US competitiveness and security in research and technology. This bill was introduced in the Senate as the Endless Frontiers Act and originally focused on restructuring the National Science Foundation and boosting its funding. However, after considerable debate and more than 600 amendments offered, the Senate

ultimately renamed and passed broader legislation addressing a number of additional issues related to science, innovation and competitiveness. This includes the incorporation of the Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act, previously [endorsed](#) by ASHG.

Nestled among the many policies related to research is a provision requiring the NIH to ensure that human genomic sequencing “is conducted in a manner that appropriately considers national security risks, including national security implications related to potential misuse of such data.” As the House is working on similar bills, ASHG has written a [letter expressing concerns](#) over the provision to the House Committee on Energy & Commerce. For more on the background, check out a [news article](#) in *Science*.

## Take Action: Inform Congress About the Value of Genetics & Genomics



The Economic Impact and Functional Applications of Human Genetics and Genomics

Produced by TEconomy Partners, LLC.  
Commissioned by the American Society of Human Genetics  
Report Authors: Simon Tripp and Marty Grueber  
May 2021

With the Administration and Congress focusing on science and research, ASHG encourages all members to continue advocating for genetics and genomics research. “[The Economic Impact and Functional Applications of Human Genetics and Genomics](#)” report is a great way to communicate the positive impacts of the field and your research for the US economy, health, and society. We encourage ASHG advocates to contact their

Members of Congress through our Advocacy Center.

## Take Action

Read ASHG Government and Public Advocacy Committee (GPAC) Chair Lynn Jorde's, PhD, recently published [op-ed in \*The Salt Lake Tribune\*](#) and his message to members in the latest issue of the [Messenger](#). In addition, we encourage you to check out recordings of last month's [ASHG Congressional Briefing](#) and [ASHG's webinar](#) on how to use the report for championing genetics and genomics research.

## Eric Lander Confirmed as Director of OSTP



Cameron Smith, White House Photographer

Late last month, the Senate [confirmed Eric Lander](#) for Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). With his confirmation, Dr. Lander is the first Director of OSTP to serve in the President's Cabinet. Read his [letter](#) posted on the OSTP blog.

## In Other News

- ASHG has signed a [multi-society letter](#), led by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), to President Biden opposing patent legislation reform that would allow the patenting of genes and other natural phenomena.
- President Biden has released his full Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget request. The request includes a significant increase for NIH and the creation of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). Read the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research's [statement](#) on the President's budget request.

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