
(March 6, 2006) Science Democrats Highlight Inadequacy of Administration's Commitment to Science

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House Committee on Science Democrats

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Science Democrats Highlight Inadequacy of Administration's Commitment to Science, Competitiveness in Budget

Members Submit Dissenting 'Views & Estimates' to Budget Committee

Washington, DC) As a means of expressing extreme discomfort with the way science is treated in the FY07 federal budget, today U.S. House Science Committee Democrats submitted dissenting "Views and Estimates" to the House Budget Committee.

Committee Democrats once again made clear that inadequate federal science and technology funding in the FY07 Administration budget will not put the U.S. on a path to increased U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Last year, the Administration's FY06 budget request elicited such bi-partisan concern that Democrats supported the Republican-drafted Views & Estimates.

"Views and Estimates are one of the few ways authorizing Committees can influence the budget process," said Ranking Member Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN). "Democrats simply could not overlook the fact this science FY07 budget contains \$1billion less than last year while we're being asked to fund new programs and eliminate vital others."

In their dissenting Views, Science Committee Democrats stated that they "find it impossible to see how less science and technology research investment would help to increase or even sustain America's rapidly dwindling competitive edge."

The Science Committee Majority supported the President's American Competitiveness Initiative and the FY07 budget request despite the fact that there is no real funding increase for science and technology. Science and technology funding would actually decrease by 1% and Research and Development would increase less than the rate of inflation.

The requested R&D funding levels mean less scientific research would be performed in the U.S. at a time when our international competitors are increasing their investment in science and technology. Recent UNESCO figures point to the rapid increase in R&D funding by U.S. competitors. Asia in particular is rapidly increasing expenditures on research and

development. China alone rose from a 3.9% investment in 1997 to 8.7% of the world total in 2002.

Rep. Gordon continued, "I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to better meet our country's science and technology needs and guard our future fiscal prosperity, but the Administration's budget blueprint will not get us there - substantively or financially. That's why I introduced a legislative package last fall aimed at implementing a U.S. competitiveness plan."

The Gordon package - based on the widely acknowledged National Academy Report - includes H.R. 4434, 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act; H.R. 4435, Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy (ARPA-E) Act; and H.R. 4596, Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act.

Committee Members Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL) and Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) also submitted 'Additional Dissenting Views' to the Budget Committee. While the legislators disagree with the overall Science Committee Majority's views, they support the Majority views for continued funding for the President's clean coal technology project, the FutureGen Initiative. "We ask the Budget committee to look favorably on the Administration's request to transfer \$203 million in prior Clean Coal funds to the FutureGen project for FY08 and beyond and we concur with the Majority's views supporting increased funding levels for carbon sequestration programs", noted Costello and Lipinski.

Science Democrats Views and Estimates is available of the Science Democrats' website. The Committee Democrats' detailed analysis of the President's FY07 Science and Technology Request can be accessed on the Science Democrats FY07 Budget website.