

(May 2, 2007) Statement During Debate of National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2007

Congressman Lipinski

May 2, 2007

Debate of the NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

As a past NSF grant recipient, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1867, the National Science Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2007. I want to thank Chairman Gordon, Chairman Baird and Dr. Ehlens for their work in bringing this strong bill to the floor today.

Today, we stand at the cusp of numerous technological breakthroughs that will completely revolutionize our way of life; from hydrogen and other advanced fuels technologies that will free us from our addiction to oil, to nanotechnology that has the potential to impact virtually every sector of our economy.

Much of this research has been made possible by grants from NSF, and by passing this bill we are continuing our support of American researchers, scientists, engineers, educators and students who will ensure that these breakthroughs continue and that America continues to lead the world technologically and economically.

I would like to point out that consideration of this legislation comes on the heels of last week's passage of the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds and Sowing the Seeds legislation. Both of these bills were introduced in response to the recommendations of the Rising Above the Gathering Storm report, which was commissioned by Congress to help the U.S. compete, prosper and be secure in the global community of the 21st century.

This legislation we are considering today, which puts us on a path to double NSF funding over 10 years, will further build our commitment to competitiveness, being led in the House by Chairman Gordon.

The NSF has a broad mission of supporting science and engineering and funding basic research across many disciplines. Basic research is very necessary, yet oftentimes, because it does not directly, only indirectly lead to advances, does not receive private funding. The NSF does this.

This legislation also specifically calls on the director of NSF to give special consideration to research proposals having high importance for future national economic competitiveness. This is critically needed.

One example is nanotechnology, a very promising field of research that has the potential to revolutionize our society from defense to health care to energy to environmental cleanup. This will help.

The bill also gives special consideration to partnerships between academics, industrial scientists and businesses. I have spoken to a lot of professors and administrators at universities who say this is a major problem in our country of taking research and getting it to the market, and this will help to do this.

Earlier today I had the opportunity to meet with five American scientists who each just recently won a Nobel Prize. They all emphasize that continued support of the NSF is crucial to America's future success, just as it is critical to their successes.

So, as a proud cosponsor of this bill, I urge the House to heed the advice of those on the cutting edge of science and take another step in bolstering American competitiveness by passing H.R. 1867.