

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope this letter finds all members of NAEVR and AEVR well. As we have navigated the intricate landscape of federal budget negotiations this fall, I wanted to take a moment to update you on the unique challenges we continue to face in advocating for funding the National Eye Institute (NEI) amid the evolving political climate.

The past few months have brought forth a set of challenges that have tested our advocacy efforts and resilience. The discussions in Congress surrounding the budget have been particularly complex, marked by a heightened sense of polarization and competing priorities which have even resulted in a change in the House Speaker. Amid these challenges, NAEVR/AEVR has worked to ensure that the importance of vision research funding and the NEI's critical role in advancing vision research is not lost in the shuffle.

The intricacies of the budget process and the various perspectives involved have made reaching a consensus more challenging than ever, starting with the debt limit deal earlier this year, up to the latest Continuing Resolution (CR) that was passed in mid-November. In these challenging budgetary environments, securing level funding for the NEI is an achievement, but still emphasizes the need for advocacy and educational efforts.

Level funding keeps NEI funding under inflationary adjustment, but when compared to a cut, ensures that the NEI can continue its vital work without significant disruption, providing researchers and scientists with the resources they need to make strides in vision research. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our advocacy team and the support of our members.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that passage of the latest CR that continues funding into January will provide an opportunity for Congress to pass a budget then. While this stability is welcomed, NAEVR/AEVR remains committed to advocating for increased support for vision research. Our ongoing efforts aim to emphasize the crucial role that the NEI plays in advancing scientific discovery, medical breakthroughs, and ultimately, improving the lives of people living with vision impairment and blindness.

As we navigate the coming months and move the organizations forward, NAEVR/AEVR will continue to engage with policymakers, cultivate relationships on both sides of the aisle, and underscore the importance of sustained investment in vision research. Your continued support and advocacy in coordination with the Alliances are invaluable as we work towards securing a brighter future for the National Eye Institute and vision science.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission, and I look forward to building and advancing our mission moving forward.

Sincerely,

Paul Lee, MD, JD
President, Board of Directors
National Alliance for Eye and
Vision Research/
Alliance for Eye and Vision
Research

