

July 28, 2014

The Honorable Mark Pocan
U.S. House of Representatives
313 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Pocan:

On behalf of the Medical Library Association (MLA) and Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) we thank you for introducing “The Next Generation Research Act.”

MLA and AAHSL strongly support the intended goal of this legislation “to demonstrate a commitment to our Nation’s scientists by increasing opportunities for the development of our next generation of researchers.” Historically, our nation has an established track record of government investment in biomedical research. Unfortunately, we are seeing a rapid decline in research funding that is having a devastating impact on the conduct of biomedical research whereby more young scientists are choosing other career paths or leaving the country to pursue their research. An analysis by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) found that between Fiscal Years 2003 and 2013, the NIH budget has seen a 22.4 percent drop in funding, and has made 34 percent fewer research project grant awards (1).

NIH funding has a proven track record of fostering economic growth throughout our nation and at the state and local levels (2). The medical library community has seen firsthand how investment in NIH research has benefited the Iowa and Nebraska economies and spurred innovation. For example, Iowa is home to 1,250 bioscience business establishments. From Fiscal Years 2004-2009, NIH awarded \$14 million to Iowa companies, and venture capital firms invested an additional \$279 million in bioscience firms during that time. University of Iowa innovation has led to the formation of 37 start-up companies, 28 of which are Iowa companies. Iowa residents held 23,729 bioscience industry jobs in 2010.

Nebraska is home to 910 bioscience business establishments. From Fiscal Years 2004-2009 NIH awarded \$416 million to Nebraska companies, and venture capital firms invested an additional \$51 million in bioscience firms during that period. In 2011, the University of Nebraska placed 20th among American universities in revenue generated from licensing university technologies, bringing in \$16.7 million that year. Nebraska residents held 14,978 bioscience industry jobs in 2010.

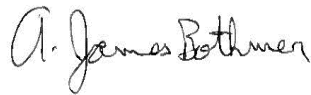
MLA and AAHSL believe that the provisions of “The Next Generation Research Act” will help restore and strengthen the efforts of the NIH to provide opportunities for young scientists and ensure that our nation remains at the forefront of innovative, cutting-edge research. It also will strengthen our state and local economies, and leads to the improved health of our citizens.

For all these reasons, we thank you for introducing the “The Next Generation Research Act.” The health sciences library community stands ready to support your efforts to secure passage of this timely and important legislation.

Sincerely,



Linda Walton, President
Medical Library Association
Director, Hardin Health Sciences Library
University of Iowa



A. James Bothmer, President
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Director, Health Sciences Library
Creighton University

References

1. Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). Budget cuts have devastating impact on biomedical research, [web document]. [24 Jan 2014; cited 24 Jul 2014]. <http://washingtonupdate.faseb.org/?p=434>.
2. Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). Advocacy resources for scientists. [web document]. [cited 24 Jul 2014]. <http://faseb.org/Policy-and-Government-Affairs/Advocacy-on-Capitol-Hill/Advocacy-Resources-for-Scientists.aspx>

Organizational Bios

The Medical Library Association (MLA) is a nonprofit, educational organization with approximately 4,000 health sciences information professional members worldwide. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) supports academic health sciences libraries and directors in advancing the patient care, research, education and community service missions of academic health centers through visionary executive leadership and expertise in health information, scholarly communication, and knowledge management.