SUPPORTING COMPUTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

January 12, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

As leaders and supporters of the computing research community responsible for providing the research base that has propelled the new economy and enabled our nation's dominant position in information technology, we are greatly concerned to learn that difficulties in the appropriations process might endanger proposed increases to three key federal science agencies in FY 2007. We urge you to protect the increases for FY 2007 already approved by the full House and the Senate Appropriations Committee for the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy Office of Science in the FY 2007 appropriations Continuing Resolution or final appropriations.

As you know, NSF, NIST and DOE Office of Science are key participants in the federal Networking and Information Technology R&D initiative, the multi-agency effort that comprises the federal role in supporting long-term, fundamental IT research. The importance of this research in enabling the new economy is well documented. Nearly every aspect of information technology research upon which we rely today traces its roots to federally sponsored university-based research. The resulting advances in information technology have led to significant improvements in product design, development and distribution for American industry, provided instant communications for people worldwide, and enabled new scientific disciplines like bioinformatics and nanotechnology that show great promise in improving a whole range of health, security, and communications technologies. Leaving basic federal science funding at FY 2006 (or lower) levels threatens to disrupt that chain of innovation, placing our nation at risk of not having the necessary resources – the people, the ideas and the infrastructure – we need to maintain our global economic leadership and ensure our continued security.

You and your colleagues in the Democratic Caucus earned high praise from our community in recognizing in your Innovation Agenda the need to increase support for fundamental research in the physical sciences, mathematics, computing and engineering in order to ensure the Nation's continued leadership in an increasingly competitive world. The President's American Competitiveness Initiative shared that commitment and the full House and the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee endorsed the need for those increases on a bipartisan basis in the appropriations bills they approved.

We commend you for your continued leadership in helping ensure the U.S. has the resources it needs to remain innovative and competitive, especially in information technology. Preserving the proposed increases for NSF, NIST and DOE Office of Science in a limited adjustment to the FY 2007 Continuing Resolution would be a simple and necessary step to ensure U.S. competitiveness. While the payoffs of past research have been dramatic, the field of information technology remains in relative infancy. Tremendous opportunities remain – far more can happen in the next ten years than has happened in the last thirty, and it is crucial that America lead the way.

Sincerely,

American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)
Computing Research Association (CRA)
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation (CASC)
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