

Congress of the United States
Washington D.C. 20515

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

As Congress continues to work on economic relief legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that you address the challenges faced by the U.S. scientific research workforce during this crisis. While COVID-19 related-research is now in overdrive, most other research has been slowed down or stopped due to pandemic-induced closures of campuses and laboratories. We are deeply concerned that the people who comprise the research workforce – graduate students, postdocs, principal investigators, and technical support staff – are at risk.

While Federal rules have allowed researchers to continue to receive their salaries from federal grant funding, their work has been stopped due to shuttered laboratories and facilities and many researchers are currently unable to make progress on their grants. Additionally, researchers will need supplemental funding to support an additional four months' salary, as many campuses will remain shuttered until the fall, at the earliest. Many core research facilities – typically funded by user fees – sit idle. Still, others have incurred significant costs for shutting down their labs, donating the personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline health care workers, and cancelling planned experiments.

Congress must act to preserve our current scientific workforce and ensure that the U.S. is prepared to continue our global scientific leadership once this crisis ends.

We strongly support the fourth relief package to include of \$26 billion in funding to cover the following important research work:

- **Cover supplements for research grants and contracts** (i.e., cost extensions) due to COVID-19 related impacts, including the need for additional salary support and/or research related ramp-up costs;
- **Provide emergency relief to sustain research support personnel and base operating costs for core research facilities** and user-funded research services until such time facilities reopen and research activities return to pre-pandemic activity levels; and
- **Fund additional graduate student and postdoc fellowships, traineeships, and research assistantships** for up to two years. Graduate students who could not complete their degrees due to pandemic related impacts should be given priority for graduate fellowships and other forms of support so they can complete their research and degrees.

Supporting the people of the U.S. scientific and medical research community will help stimulate the U.S. economy in the near term by keeping these workers employed. Protecting the research workforce is critical to state and local economies as research universities, academic medical centers, independent research institutes, and national labs are major employers in all 50 states. In the long term, these researchers are essential to protecting our nation's public health, national security, economic growth and international competitiveness. Preserving our scientific infrastructure and protecting our innovation pipeline will help ensure U.S. leadership in the world.

We appreciate your leadership as Congress continues to respond to the economic fallout from this pandemic. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Barbra Lee
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
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