

Coalition for National Security Research

As Congress works to craft a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2014, the Coalition for National Security Research urges support for the authorized levels for the Defense Science and Technology (S&T) programs, as outlined in the FY 14 National Defense Authorization Act (H.Res. 441) which passed the Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support.

While the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 provided some relief from sequestration, House and Senate appropriators are still faced with difficult decisions as they seek to cut billions from their respective Defense Appropriations bills. As the process of prioritizing investments within the Defense funding bill moves forward, we hope appropriations negotiators will look to the authorized levels of funding as a guide to ensure the viability of the S&T accounts. The force of the future will be highly dependent upon innovation and technological capabilities which require continued investments. Several recent reports and reviews from Secretary Hagel and other military leaders underscore this need.

The authorized levels would begin the trajectory towards the 20-20 benchmark for investments in Defense S&T: establishing the level of Defense S&T funding to equal 20 percent of the total Defense RDT&E budget, and the level of 6.1 basic research funding to equal 20 percent of the total Defense S&T budget. The DoD S&T portfolio is the incubator for the next generation of defense technologies that will maintain our military superiority and increase the capabilities of warfighters during a time of transformation and force reduction. The 6.1 basic research accounts support the long-term scientific discovery that provides the foundational knowledge for new technologies. The 6.2 applied research accounts refine discoveries by exploring and determining the operational parameters and practicality of the technology to military needs. The 6.3 advanced technology development accounts support the creation of larger-scale hardware and technology to be tested in realistic environments.

DoD S&T investments not only support the development of the technologies of the future but also train the next generation of scientists and engineers and provides critical support for STEM programs. Failure to adequately fund these accounts, at levels already authorized, may have long-term negative impacts as our technological edge begins to erode. DoD's investments in technological innovation have provided significant advances in equipment and tactics used by our warfighters as they face ever-changing threats and challenges. Without sustained investment in these areas, we will jeopardize our military's strength and lose our technological advantage.

Given the critical role it plays in maintaining military readiness and providing a technologically superior force, we urge prioritization of the Defense Science and Technology programs in the final FY 2014 Defense Appropriations bill.