

June 24, 2008

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Chairman
House Committee on Science and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Gordon:

As leaders in the science, engineering, education, and women's communities, we are writing you to voice our support of H.R. 6314, Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Act of 2008 recently introduced by Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas. We believe that H.R. 6314 is a crucial step to ensuring that women scientists and engineers are able to envision a career path that allows them to reach their full intellectual potential so that they may make significant contributions to scientific innovations in the U.S. and worldwide. We also applaud the House Science and Technology Committee's leadership and foresight in holding hearings related to this topic earlier this year.

In its 2007 report, *Beyond Bias and Barriers*, the National Academies state that, to maintain its scientific and engineering leadership amid increasing economic and educational globalization, the United States must aggressively pursue the innovative capacity of all of its people—women and men. While women make up almost half of the U.S. workforce, they continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions, particularly in the higher academic faculty ranks and leadership positions.

Unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures are hindering the access and advancement of women in science and engineering. Improving the policies within federal agencies and academic institutions to eliminate gender biases against women in STEM will help ensure that the U.S. remains the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century. Therefore, we strongly endorse the provisions under H.R. 6314, which authorize workshops to educate program officers, members of grant review panels, institution of higher education department chairs, and other federally funded researchers about methods that minimize the effects of gender bias in evaluation.

We also support the legislation's development of a uniform policy for extended research grant support and interim technical staff support for caregivers; the collection and annual reporting by the research-funding agencies, such as the Department of Energy (DOE) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), of standardized information on the agency's grant recipients' demographics, field, award type, budget request, review score, and funding outcome; and the public recognition of higher education science and engineering departments who participate in the aforementioned workshops.

As dedicated organizations working to improve diversity in our nation's STEM professions, we strongly support this bill, which has the potential to reduce the barriers to success for women scientists and engineers in STEM careers. We are committed to working with you, your staff, and Representative Johnson's office to ensure the enactment of this bill, which is designed to expand the talent pool by tapping into the full creativity of all our people.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Janet Bandows Koster, Executive Director, Association for Women in Science, at 202-326-8944 or Melissa Carl, Washington Representative, Society of Women Engineers, at 202-785-7380.

Sincerely,

American Chemical Society
American Gastroenterological Association
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Mathematical Society
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Statistical Association
ASME Center for Leadership and Diversity
Anita Borg Institute for Women
Association for Psychological Science
Association of Women Geoscientists
Association for Women in Science
Biomedical Engineering Society
Center for Inquiry
Council on Undergraduate Research
Ecological Society of America
The Expanding Your Horizon Network
International Technology Education Association
National Center for Optics and Photonics Education (OP-TEC)
National Center for Women and Information Technology
National Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science
National Science Teachers Association
Ohio Technology Education Association
Pathways into Science
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Women Engineers
Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education
University of Pittsburgh
WAGE (We Advocate Gender Equity)