June 3, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House      House Republican Leader
H-232, the Capitol        H-204, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515     Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

As the House and Senate move toward an agreement on the supplemental spending bill, we strongly urge you to preserve the funding increases for the physical sciences and engineering included in the Senate-passed legislation. The $200 million appropriated to the National Science Foundation and the $100 million for the Office of Science in the Department of Energy represent the bare minimum Congress should provide for basic research and math and science education at a time when America’s economic competitiveness is increasingly challenged.

The FY 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act came up woefully short of the funding commitments made by Congress and the Administration in the Democratic Innovation Agenda and the American Competitiveness Initiative. The consequences of this inaction are now apparent: cutting edge research has been halted or not launched; scientists in the hundreds have lost their jobs; fewer teachers are being trained; bright students are choosing alternative paths; and international partnerships have been severed. Basic science and engineering research at universities and national labs drives our nation’s ability to develop breakthroughs ranging from energy- and life-saving devices to technologies that contribute to our economic growth, national defense and societal welfare. Now is the time to invest in America’s competitive future and prevent further backsliding.

America’s business, scientific and academic communities are united in asking for your leadership to preserve this funding in the FY 2008 supplemental and to put America back on track in FY 2009 to secure our crucial innovation investment commitments. We appreciate your continued efforts and look forward to working with you throughout this process.

Sincerely,
Hector Ruiz  
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President  
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Chancellor
Vanderbilt University

Richard C. Levin
President
Yale University
CC:

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader
The Honorable Jim Clyburn, Majority Whip
The Honorable Roy Blunt, Republican Whip
The Honorable Rahm Emanuel, Chairman, Democratic Caucus
The Honorable Adam Putnam, Chairman, House Republican Conference
The Honorable Thaddeus G. McCotter, Chairman, Republican Conference Committee
The Honorable David Obey, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee