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FASEB PRESIDENT TESTIFIES BEFORE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE NEED FOR NIH FUNDING

Bethesda, MD – “With every excellent idea left unfunded, we stand to miss or delay the critical discoveries that could lead to therapies for our most debilitating health conditions,” said Robert Palazzo, Ph.D, President of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) in testimony presented before the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee today. Testifying in support of the medical research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Palazzo continued, “We have moved past the point where scientists are spending more time filling out applications than doing research in the lab. Now we’re at the point where many may be giving up.”

Palazzo praised Chairman David Obey (D-WI) and the Subcommittee for their leadership in championing NIH funding, and addressed the grave consequences of continuing the current trend of flat-funding. “During the next 25 years, the number of Americans with chronic diseases is projected to reach 46 million,” Palazzo stated. “If we are to successfully confront the health care challenges associated with a growing elderly population, it’s going to require sustained support for basic and clinical research.”

The FASEB President also spoke to the question Chairman Obey had raised in previous hearings, namely the cost of failing to adequately fund NIH. “Young scientists see their mentors struggle to maintain grant funding from NIH and question whether they should invest in such a risky, albeit noble, career,” he said. “Applications for R01 grants from previously unfunded scientists showed an appreciable drop in 2007, declining by nearly 600 applications from the 2006 level. That represents a loss of hundreds of new scientists and all of the talent and intellectual capital that they bring to the system.”

But the even greater tragedy, Palazzo concluded, would be the loss of hope to the patients who desperately need the treatments and therapies arising from research funded by NIH. “We can help Jenna,” he said, referring to an earlier witness whose moving testimony detailed her daughter’s struggle with the kidney disease, focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS). “Researchers receiving NIH funds are united by a compelling desire: to investigate the underlying biology of human disease and use this knowledge to improve our health and save lives... [Congress] can fulfill the extraordinary scientific and medical promise of biomedical research by renewing our commitment to NIH.”

To read the complete testimony submitted for the record, please click [here](#).

FASEB is composed of 21 societies with more than 80,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB enhances the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB’s mission is to advance biological science through collaborative advocacy for research policies that promote scientific progress and education and lead to improvements in human health.