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COSSA STATEMENT ON THE AMERICA COMPETES REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2014 (S. 2757)

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) applauds Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV and original cosponsors Dick Durbin, Bill Nelson, Mark Pryor, Chris Coons, and Edward Markey for introducing the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014* (S. 2757) on July 31, 2014 and urges its immediate consideration.

The *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014* provides the necessary vision and levels of investment needed to ensure the U.S. remains the global leader in science and technology innovation, keeping with the bold, visionary plan for long-term investment in basic science set forth in the original *America COMPETES Act of 2007*. The ambitious authorization levels—particularly for the National Science Foundation (NSF)—signal to the world that the U.S. remains committed to the progress of science and does not intend to lose its leadership edge. Further, the bill reinforces the standing of NSF’s merit review process as the envy of the world.

COSSA also commends the bill’s sponsors for recognizing the need to support “all science,” including the social, behavioral, and economic (SBE) sciences. As stated in S. 2757, investment in the SBE sciences has led to major contributions to both the progress of science and to society. SBE projects funded by NSF are subject to the same level of rigorous peer review as all other fields of science. Social and behavioral science is a critical STEM discipline responsible for advancing knowledge about the human condition.

The U.S. scientific enterprise must remain insulated from political and ideological pressure if we are to encourage the most innovative science. Publicly holding up individual research grants for ridicule based solely on their titles—research projects that a distinguished panel of scientific peers has determined meritorious—misleads the American public by asserting that taxpayer funding is being wasted without fully understanding the projects, their intent, and the benefit to society and/or the progress of science. Instead, the SBE sciences are responsible for enhancing the nation’s understanding of the economy, national security, and the health of our citizens. It helps to answer questions of national importance like how to convince a community in the path of a tornado to seek cover, or statistical analyses that help local governments understand crime patterns, among others. Without this science, policy-making on issues of national significance will not be based on evidence and precious resources will be wasted.

COSSA urges the Senate to move expeditiously on the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014*.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations is a nonprofit organization serving as a united voice for more than 115 professional associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and colleges and universities who care about a robust social and behavioral scientific research enterprise. COSSA works to promote federal funding for and federal policies that positively impact the social and behavioral sciences.

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