AAU CRITICIZES FY16 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR CUT IN DEFENSE BASIC RESEARCH

House Bill Would Cut Defense Basic Research by 7% Despite Infusion of Defense Funds

Following is a statement by the Association of American Universities on the House FY16 Defense appropriations bill (H.R. 2685), scheduled for floor consideration this week.

The House is scheduled to vote this week on the FY16 Defense appropriations bill. We are dismayed by the proposed cut of over seven percent to Defense 6.1 basic research. Congress should be increasing the investment in Defense basic research, not cutting it.

Department of Defense basic research innovations have contributed significantly to our nation’s security and economic progress. Innovation and technological advances have helped make our military the best-equipped and most effective in the world. Yet none of these advancements would have been possible without robust investments in Defense basic research. Defense basic research has led to such innovations as lasers, radar, fiber optics, infrared technologies, and advanced materials. A cut to basic research would be shortsighted because it would mean a cut to future advancements in the capabilities and safety of our men and women in uniform.

Unfortunately, the Administration proposed an even steeper (8.3 percent) cut to Defense basic research. Neither the Administration nor the House Appropriations Committee can blame a lack of resources, as both disregarded the sequestration-level spending cap that current law imposes on defense spending. This makes the cut to basic research all the more difficult to understand.

Last year, Congress made the wise decision to increase the nation’s investment in Defense basic research. We call on Congress to stay on this path by providing our country with the research it needs to enhance national security and to ensure that our military has the technology it needs to be prepared on the battlefield, not only now but in the future as well.

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The Association of American Universities (AAU) is an association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian public and private research universities. It focuses on issues such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education. AAU member universities are on the leading edge of innovation, scholarship, and solutions that contribute to the nation’s economy, security, and wellbeing. AAU’s 60 U.S. universities award nearly one-half of all U.S. doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in STEM fields.

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