In addition to inviting NIH Director Dr. Elias Zerhouni to testify at a May 19 hearing of the Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee, Chairman Arlen Specter (R-PA) invited selected representatives of the medical research advocacy community. NAEVR was represented by Dr. Peter McDonnell (Wilmer Eye Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine), who testified about the impact on vision research from the cut to the NEI budget, as proposed in the President’s FY 2007 budget (see funding chart inside).

Dr. McDonnell focused on missed research opportunities into age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness in the United States, since Dr. Zerhouni has heralded the NEI-funded discovery of an AMD gene as an NIH breakthrough. The budget’s impact on vision was also cited by other organizations—including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF) regarding diabetic retinopathy and the Christopher Reeve Foundation regarding nerve regeneration in glaucoma—demonstrating the trans-Institute nature of vision research.

Visit www.eyeresearch.org for the full text of Dr. McDonnell’s statement and NAEVR’s comprehensive testimony.

“The President’s proposed FY2007 budget will have a detrimental impact on the entire NEI research portfolio, especially its aggressive research programs into AMD which are the direct result of the past NIH budget-doubling.” —Dr. Peter McDonnell