Congress Acts to Supplement FY2008 NIH Appropriations, Increase FY2009 Funding

<table>
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<th>FY 2008 Final</th>
<th>FY 2009 Budget</th>
<th>FY 2009 House</th>
<th>FY 2009 Senate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>$29.38B</td>
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<td>NEI</td>
<td>$670.7M</td>
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<td>$690.7M</td>
<td>$687.3M</td>
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* FY2008 figures include original appropriation sums of $29.2B NIH / $667.1M NEI plus Supplemental Appropriations of $150M NIH / $3.5M NEI. FY2009 budget, house, and Senate percent increases based on initial FY2008 appropriations.

**ENACTED: $150 Million in FY2008 Supplemental NIH Appropriations**

On June 30, President Bush signed into law a Supplemental Appropriations bill, passed overwhelmingly by the House (416-12) and the Senate (92-6), which included a science package of $150 million in additional FY2008 NIH funding, as well as $62.5 million for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NEI’s share of these supplemental funds is $3.5 million, for an FY2008 total of $670.7 million, or a 0.5 percent increase over FY2007. This will go primarily to fund R01 grants, about eight additional, as well as some Center grant and bridge award funding. Bipartisan Senate leaders, specifically Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Ranking Member Arlen Specter (R-PA), had directed these additional NIH resources to fund 246 research grants beyond that possible in initial FY2008 appropriations.

**PROPOSED: $5.2 Billion in FY2008 Supplemental NIH Appropriations**

On July 16, Senator Specter (on behalf of Senator Harkin) made a statement on the Senate floor introducing Senate Bill 3272, which would make emergency supplemental appropriations of $5.2 billion for the NIH in FY2008 – $4 billion would be provided to the Office of the NIH Director for prorating to Institutes and Centers, and $1.2 billion would go to the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to enhance cancer research. Senator Specter, who just completed a chemotherapy regime for Hodgkin’s disease, noted that these emergency appropriations were necessary to restore NIH’s purchasing power, which has been eroded by 13 percent due to flat funding and biomedical inflation over the past five funding cycles. Whether the supplemental is acted upon in the remaining days of the 110th Congress is currently unclear. However, it is a dramatic statement about the extent of loss of NIH’s purchasing power that provides a basis for future actions to increase funding.

**PROPOSED: FY2009 NEI Increases of $23.6 Million (House), $20.2 Million (Senate)**

Per the funding chart, both the House and Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittees reported out FY2009 spending bills that would increase NIH funding by $1 billion (inclusive of Global AIDS funding and other transfers) and $20 million-plus increases for the NEI. Both bills match the biomedical inflation rate of 3.5 percent for increased funding overall for the NIH, which had been proposed to be flat-funded in the President’s proposed FY2009 budget. The House bill, which is slightly more generous, has yet to be reported out of full Committee due to partisan disputes. Both bills are unlikely to be acted on until the 111th Congress convenes in early 2009.

**NAEVR Builds Global Community of Support at 2008 ARVO Annual Meeting**

From April 27-May 1, ARVO’s United States members sent email letters to their Members of Congress from the NAEVR Contact Congress booth at the ARVO Annual Meeting. The timing was pivotal, as the House and Senate were finalizing a Budget Resolution and the respective LHHS Appropriations Subcommittees were soliciting input on FY2009 spending bills. NAEVR Advocacy Manager David Epstein also spoke with researchers interested in submitting a grant application to the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP), a $50 million pool of funds for basic and translational research awards for which vision is eligible.

This year, the booth served as a focal point for building a global community of support for eye and vision research funding. NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky, who authored ARVO’s International Advocacy Handbook: Tools to Influence Vision Research Funding, premiered this new resource document at an afternoon workshop, then met with interested ARVO members at the booth. ARVO has posted the Handbook and its illustrative appendices at www.arvo.org/advocacyhandbook.