**Advocacy**

**Vision Community on Capitol Hill as Budget Deal and Omnibus Pass**

NAEVR was pleased to host/support numerous Advocacy Days in first-quarter 2018 that were held as Congress was considering the Budget Deal and FY2018 Omnibus.

On February 9—just hours after Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018—26 domestic and international ARVO members reflecting Annual Meeting Planning Committee (AMPC) members, ARVO Advocacy and Outreach Committee members, and ARVO Science Communication Training Fellows made 40-plus visits to Congressional offices thanking them for past NIH/NEI funding increases and requesting sustained future funding increases. In emphasizing the value of the NIH/NEI investment, the advocates cited the recent ARVO paper published in December 2017 in the American Journal of Ophthalmology highlighting $11.2 billion in government and patient savings stemming from the invention of Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT).

On March 22—as the House was considering the FY2018 Omnibus bill—NAEVR hosted a Private Vision Research Funding Foundations Advocacy Day with attendees of the previous day’s Fifth Annual Vision Research Funding Partnership event, hosted by Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB, see below). Advocates described the importance of their organizations to the state/district and their role in providing early-stage and bridge funding for investigators.

**ARVO**

The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology

**RPB**

Research to Prevent Blindness

**AAPOS**

American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

**Advocates**

On March 20, as Congressional leaders were preparing to release the FY2018 Omnibus spending bill text, 80-plus advocates attending the annual meeting of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS) visited Capitol Hill, using NAEVR-generated messages about the value of NEI-funded pediatric research among several requests. NAEVR’s James Jorkasky attended the preparatory session for the event, which was managed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

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From left: Morgan Brand from the office of Senator Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY) with RPB’s Brian Holland, PhD and Diana Friedman. The group also visited the office of Cong. Nita Lowey (D-NY)—Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee—just as the House concluded its vote on the bill.

Sandra Blackwood (International Retinal Research Foundation), left, and Torrey DeKeyser (EyeSight Foundation of Alabama), right, with Katie Campbell in the office of Senator Doug Jones (D-AL)

Representatives of the American Macular Degeneration Foundation with Cong. Jim Himes (D-CT, second right) from left: Neena Haider, PhD (Mass Eye & Ear/ Harvard), Matt Levine, Chip Goehring, and Paul Gariepy

Ms. DeKeyser visited Cong. Robert Aderholt (R-AL)—a House Appropriator—and his staffer Megan Medley

NEI Director Paul Sieving, MD, PhD joined the Fifth Annual Vision Research Funding Partnership event to update attendees on NEI initiatives. The convening of organizations that support vision research provides an opportunity for funders to discuss potential collaborations with each other. NAEVR has been engaged in the event since the beginning and is pleased to host the accompanying Advocacy Day.

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Above: James Jorkasky with AAPOS President Derek Sprunger, MD (Indiana University School of Medicine), below with Iris Kassem, MD, PhD (Medical College of Wisconsin) and John Brabyn, PhD (Smith Kettlewell Eye Research Institute). Dr. Kassem participated in NAEVR’s Third Annual Emerging Vision Scientists Day in September 2017.