

AIMBE POSITION STATEMENT

AIMBE's Support of Federal Legislation Aimed at Accelerating the Pace the Innovation

ISSUE

As Congress works to balance the federal budget to allow the United States to overcome nearly eight years of budget deficits, discretionary spending continues to be cut in the areas of science and engineering research and education. This comes at the cost of risking America's role as the global leader for engineering and technical innovation.

BACKGROUND

As we continue into the 21st century, America appears to be at a crossroads when it comes to its commitment to be the global leader in technological advances. In 2001, President Bush said "Science and technology have never been more essential to the defense of the nation and the health of our economy," highlighting the importance for the United States to invest in technology research and development. Yet, the state of America's readiness and competitiveness is in question. In the 2000 workforce, 38% of those holding a Ph.D. in the U.S. workforce were foreign born. In 2004, only 15% of all American undergraduate students earned degrees in natural science or engineering, compared with 47% in France, and 67% in Singapore.

In addition to spurring America's engineering workforce, actions must be taken to spur innovation throughout the public and private sectors. In the same manner in which many of the nation's best and brightest rose to the challenges of the space race in the 1960's, we must again find ways to attract the world's best and brightest to America, helping to strengthen America's claim as the global leader in technology and innovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress must take action in the form of legislation aimed at accelerating the pace of innovation. AIMBE supports the following actions:

- Support the adoption of the FY09 authorization level for full funding necessary to implement the America COMPETES Act.
- Specifically, support language designating appropriations for medical and biological engineering research funding (NIST, NSF, NIH, DOE, DOD, etc.).
- Support other innovation reform related bills including (but not limited to) patent reform legislation and the FDA Critical Path Initiative.
- Support the reintroduction of the CURES Act in the Senate.
- Increase funding for SBIR/STTR across all federal agencies.

