

Davis Leads Effort to Strengthen Competes Act

Davis-Grijalva-Honda-Kildee Amendment to

H.R. 5116, America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010

I want to thank Chairman Gordon and Ranking Member Hall of the Science and Technology Committee for their work to develop and promote policies to strengthen our nation's competitiveness in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In particular, I applaud the Chairman for his leadership in broadening the participation of individuals and institutions that are underrepresented in STEM. You and your staff actively engaged with me and other Members of the Congressional Black Caucus to listen to and address our concerns. I want to recognize and thank Dahlia Sokolov on your staff for sharing her expertise and for being so responsive.

According to the Census Bureau, 39% of the population under the age of 18 is a racial or ethnic minority. Yet, in 2003, only 4.4% of U.S. science and engineering jobs were held by African Americans and only 3.4% by Hispanics. Further, women represent only a little more than one quarter of our science and technology workforce. Although Historically Black Colleges and Universities represent only 3% of our nation's colleges, they graduate 40% of African Americans with degrees in STEM areas and 60% of African Americans with degrees in engineering; yet, they receive only about 1% of all federal R&D support. Many experts maintain that the ability of the US to produce enough scientists will fall far short unless we take strong action to develop the potential of women and minorities. Thus, broadening participation efforts are critical to meeting the growing demand for U.S. workers with STEM skills and

to improving American competitiveness globally.

H.R. 5116 includes multiple provisions that respond to concerns raised by multiple reports, STEM experts, and Members of the Congress about the need to broaden participation of individuals and institutions that are underrepresented in STEM fields. The amendment that I offer along with my colleagues Congressman Grijalva, Congressman Honda, and Congressman Kildee builds upon the existing provisions in the bill to further increase the access of minority students to and the capacity of minority institutions to provide STEM opportunities.

I am pleased that this amendment is supported by multiple higher education organizations, including:

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The American Association of Community Colleges;

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The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities;

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The Institute for Higher Education Policy;

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The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education;

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The Presidents and Chancellors of the 1890 Universities;

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The Thurgood Marshall College Fund; and

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The United Negro College
Fund.

Our amendment does five things.

First, it clarifies that the new STEM Education Strategic Plan will include a specific focus on broadening participation of individuals and institutions that are underrepresented in STEM. H.R. 5116 recognizes the need to coordinate STEM education efforts within the Executive Branch. Consistent with experts in STEM education, our amendment simply clarifies that the strategic plan for coordinating STEM education across the Executive Branch should have each agency identify steps it takes to broaden the participation.

Second, it includes a National Academy of Sciences report on strengthening the capacity of two-year institutions to provide STEM opportunities. The majority of Latino and African American students attend two-year colleges. Moreover, two-year institutions play an integral role in training STEM professionals through terminal and certification degrees as well as in preparing students to transfer to four-year institutions to complete STEM baccalaureate degrees. Thus, two-year institutions are a critical component of the STEM pipeline.

Although a few reports have examined the role of these institutions in a particular STEM discipline, no study has looked at comprehensively at two-year institutions with regard to STEM. A comprehensive analysis of how Federal agencies can provide increased opportunities for two-year institutions to participate across the portfolios of STEM education and research will do much to improve success of low income and minority students in STEM fields.

Third, our amendment strengthens the data collections related to STEM faculty and Federal research grants by ensuring the data are examined by race/ethnicity and gender. These data are important to assessing progress in broadening participation. Consistent with NSF data collections on students in STEM fields, the amendment simply ensures that these important data collections will be examined by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Fourth, the amendment strengthens the institutional research partnerships provision by including a reporting requirement on partnership grants. In order to ensure that partnerships among institutions are collaborative and equitable, H.R. 5116 requires NSF to award funds directly to institutional partners involved in a research collaboration funded at a level greater than \$2 million. The amendment simply includes a report requirement so that we have a fuller understanding of the number and nature of such partnerships.

Finally, our amendment clarifies that undergraduates in two-year programs are eligible for the Undergraduates In Standard Research Grants. The amendment simply clarifies that students in certificate, associate, or baccalaureate degree programs qualify for research grants.

As I close, I thank the Chairman
and Ranking Member again for their leadership.
I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment
that will strengthen the bill's provisions to broaden participation.