



Linguistic Society of America  
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June 29, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman, House Appropriations  
H-307, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers & Ranking Member Dicks,

On behalf of the Linguistic Society of America, I write to express dismay that the House Commerce, Justice & Science Subcommittee is considering eliminating, or severely cutting back, the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF). This short-sighted move would damage the nation's security, health, and economic competitiveness.

Many scientists believe that the largest problems facing the world today involve human behavior. A deeper understanding of mind, brain, and behavior is the most exciting frontier of science and the most promising path to a stronger nation. Research funded by NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences offers us a better understanding of problems like these:

- How children learn to read, write, add, and do science, and how we might use this knowledge to improve our underperforming schools.
- How people spend, save, and invest, and how these choices contribute to economic growth and to financial crises.
- How language works, and how we can teach people foreign languages and design software that translates automatically—both crucial to national security and economic competitiveness in an increasingly globalized world.
- How people deal with complex information, and how we can design better ways of presenting information that will reduce costly training and eliminate disastrous errors.

From an international perspective, NSF is one of very few funding agencies that encompasses the behavioral sciences as well as the natural and life sciences and engineering. That encourages research collaborations that are not found in other countries, and has led to dramatic results, particularly in research involving language sciences and information sciences.. This support must continue in order for the nation to maintain its competitive edge.

Relatively small investments today in the behavioral sciences offer enormous payoffs in

the long run. Freezing our understanding at the current level would be extraordinarily expensive. It would prevent future generations of Americans from realizing their full potential as citizens and as productive members of society. I urge you to ensure that the USA retains its position at the forefront of basic scientific research in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Chung', written in a cursive style.

Sandra Chung  
President

Cc: The Honorable Frank Wolf, Chair, House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Chaka Fattah, Ranking Member, House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee