

Senate Democrats introduce COMPETES reauthorization bill

July 31, 2014

Senate Democrats introduced a bill that would fund science research and education and reauthorize the 2010 Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Reauthorization Act on July 31. The America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014 (S. 2757), introduced by Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and five Democratic cosponsors, would authorize stable funding and sustained increases for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The bill would provide increases to the NSF budget every year for the next five years, going from \$7.65 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to \$9.9 billion in FY 2019.

S. 2757 differs in key ways from the House of Representative's Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology (FIRST) Act of 2014 (H.R. 4186). The Senate bill would not set NSF funding at the directorate level and does not include a "national interest" requirement in the NSF grant review process. The FIRST Act places priority on biology, math, computers, and engineering programs while cutting funding for the geosciences and social, behavioral, and economic sciences. The Senate COMPETES Reauthorization Act does not cut funding and focuses on "robust support for basic research across a wide range of science and engineering fields."

The bill will was referred to Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and will likely be considered when the Senate reconvenes.

Sources: E&E News, ScienceInsider, Senator Jay Rockefeller's website
