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September 30, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

I am writing to urge your support for continued funding for the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship program at the U.S. Department of Education. The program, currently funded at \$8.084 million is eliminated in the draft Fiscal Year 2012 House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill which was recently released by the House Appropriations Committee.

The Javits Fellowship program is the only federal program that supports graduate students in the humanities, arts and social sciences. It is highly competitive, receiving an average of over 1,000 applications annually for 40-65 awards. Funding cuts and minimal annual increases in stipend levels have resulted in the number of fellows supported dropping by over 45% since 2002.

The Administration's Fiscal year 2012 budget request proposed a consolidation of the Javits program into the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program. However, the proposed funding level for the GAANN program does not reflect the consolidation and the proposed request of \$40.7 million to maintain support for Javits Fellows going forward.

The humanities, social sciences and arts disciplines play a vital role in enhancing our capacity for innovation, adaptation, and our quality of life. The major issues facing the twenty-first century – whether familial, local, national or global in scope, from school board controversies to the cultural roots of international terrorism – all include dimensions of cultural expression and understanding that cannot be comprehended and addressed effectively without the contributions of the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. Leaders in these key fields are needed to think critically, interpret events, and help provide solutions to global problems that are increasingly associated with differing perspectives and values. Producing the next generation of scholars in the humanities, social sciences and arts must be a priority to ensure that our future leaders benefit from the crucial vantage points created through the study of history, foreign language and area studies, political science, sociology and psychology, among others.

I urge you to provide a total of \$40.7 million for the Javits and GAANN programs. Both programs are vital to training experts and leaders in a wide spectrum of fields that are essential to maintaining U.S. competitiveness in the 21st century knowledge-based global economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Debra W. Stewart
President

cc: Members of the House Appropriations Committee

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