

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-0512

Majority Whip Jim Clyburn
274 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-4006

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Minority Whip Steve Scalise
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-1801

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Whip Clyburn, and Minority Whip Scalise,

As Congress continues to lead the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that you address the extenuating challenges faced by junior scientists supported by federal grants across the scientific workforce. Junior scientists—including graduate students, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and research fellows—represent the next generation of the nation’s scientific workforce, and have had their training acutely impacted by the pandemic. To support them, we urge the inclusion of supplemental appropriations directed to junior scientists whose careers have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic so they can complete their education, training and move on in the career and continue contributing to the American research enterprise.

While the hard work of this nation’s scientists and researchers have resulted in at least three vaccines for COVID-19, the community has not been unaffected. Many research facilities have been shut down, or have had activities significantly restricted for much of 2020 and continuing into 2021 and valuable opportunities to travel and otherwise collaborative in person have been cancelled. Junior scientists, postdocs and other trainees in particular have been suffering as institutional closures have limited access to classrooms and labs, delaying instruction and research necessary for degree completion. Social distancing has made in-person collaboration nearly impossible, further delaying the careers of junior scientists. And increased domestic and caregiving responsibilities have significantly compromised time management and mental health for scientists, especially female scientists.

The pandemic has only exacerbated the funding and advancement barriers that junior scientists were already facing, resulting in even more limited funding and competition for increasingly scarce jobs. With all the collective challenges brought on by the pandemic, a generation of junior scientists are left in an extremely vulnerable position—without financial support as existing grants that were funded for standard timelines are expiring and without future career prospects as a result of delays in completing their education and training.

These junior colleagues are not only the researchers of tomorrow, but the country counts on them to educate and train the generation following them. The loss of junior scientists now will result in losses over several generations. According to numerous reports, without new investment in STEM graduate students, doctoral students, and postdoctoral researchers and fellows, we are at risk of losing the next generation of scientists. We need supplemental funding for junior scientists so they can complete their education and training and continue contributing to the American research enterprise.

We appreciate and applaud your leadership during these difficult times and thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,