

Republicans Regain Control of U.S. House

Suggest Sizable Cuts to Domestic Programs

The results of the U.S. 2010 midterm elections are in, and they contain sizable wins for Republicans and potentially bad news for federally funded science in the U.S. In the U.S. House of Representatives, Republicans will take over leadership after winning 60 seats. In the U.S. Senate, Democrats will retain control but their majority will shrink to only four seats.

Along with U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) champions like Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE) and Sen. Arlen Specter (D-PA), who lost their seats during the primary election season, many strong supporters lost their seats in Congress on Election Day.

This change in leadership in Congress could have significant implications for the federally funded life science community in the U.S. In press interviews on election night, Republican leaders indicated they will focus on three policy areas in the next Congress: creating jobs, cutting federal spending, and reducing the federal debt and deficit.

Early indications suggest that these budget cuts could have serious implications for both the NIH and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA), named the next House Majority Leader, has suggested federal spending could be rolled back to FY08 levels. That plan would roll the NIH budget back

from a projected FY11 budget of \$32 billion to \$29.312 billion. The NSF budget would be reduced from the projected \$7.4 billion for FY11 to the FY08 level of \$6.06 billion.

Cantor has also released a plan, “Delivering on Our Commitment,” that explains in detail many of the priorities of the new House leadership. Of particular concern to the U.S. science community is Cantor’s proposal to offer a series of rescission bills. These would roll back federal spending. In the past, Congress would vote on single rescission bills covering the entire federal budget. Cantor is proposing to offer a series of rescission bills that could allow House Republicans to be more detailed in their budget cutting.

In the report, Rep. Cantor explains the rationale for the multiple bills. “I believe this approach—a series of rescission bills under an open amendment process—will provide House Republicans the opportunity not only to demonstrate our commitment to fiscal discipline, but also to highlight the simple fact that government spending exploded in the last Congress.”

For up-to-date results of the elections, go to www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/election-results-2010. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

Taxes, Aliens, and Embryos

U.S. voters were busy on Election Day in November. Voters elected 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 36 members of the U.S. Senate, 36 state governors, and numerous state and local officials. Nationwide, 160 ballot measures also appeared on state ballots.

While 72% of Indiana voters supported a limitation on property taxes, 84% of Denver voters rejected the creation of an “extraterrestrial affairs commission,” which would have been the first such agency in the world.

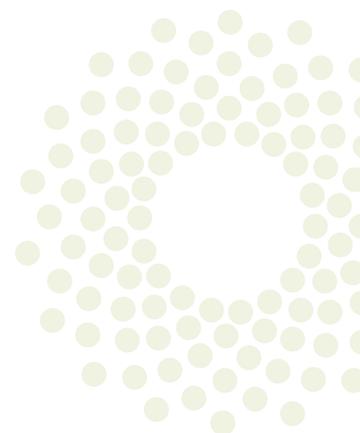
Colorado voters rejected a measure that would have provided constitutional rights to individuals “at the beginning of biological

development.” The ballot measure, Amendment 62, was rejected by a 3–1 margin—the same as the 2008 vote on an almost identical measure.

“Personhood” supporters were unsuccessful in getting similar initiatives on the 2010 ballots in Nevada, Missouri, Florida, and Kansas. Efforts are already under way in Mississippi and other states for the 2011 and 2012 elections.

Extending personhood to early-stage embryos is becoming an increasingly popular “one-size-fits-all” strategy for the “pro-life” advocacy community in its efforts against policies such as abortion rights and government-funded embryonic stem cell research. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson



ASCB, Others Suggest Improvements to Cures Program

The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a new responsibility, and the ASCB and three other groups have some ideas on how it can carry out that new task.

The healthcare reform bill, which became law in March 2010, included the creation of the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN). The mission of CAN is to accelerate the development of high-needs cures and to overcome barriers to the successful translation of basic research to clinical applications. The FY11 NIH budget, currently being considered by the U.S. Congress, includes \$50 million for CAN to fund grants and partnerships. Each grantee could receive a maximum of \$15 million in the first year.

The ASCB Public Policy Committee has been monitoring the development of CAN for over a year. As the NIH considers the implementation of CAN, the ASCB sought to collaborate with the American Association of Immunologists (AAI), the Coalition for Life Sciences (CLS), and the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB). ASCB's November letter to NIH Director

Francis Collins expressed concern and support for the role CAN could play in the development of treatments and cures. However, it also offered two suggestions that would improve CAN.

The group is particularly concerned about the composition of the CAN Review Board. The letter says, "Despite the significant scientific responsibilities of the 24-member board, the CAN authorizing language only requires that one member be from the basic research community."

The group is also troubled about how projects will be selected for funding. Supporters of the program point to the flexibility of the program and compare it to the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). In the letter to Collins, the group said, "Awarding large grants outside of an expert academic peer review process would cast doubt on the scientific rigor of the research being funded by CAN."

To read the complete letter, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ASCB-CAN-letter>. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

See How NIH ARRA Funds Are Helping Cold Spring Harbor:

Cold Spring Harbor Lab Says Benefits of ARRA Funding Will Outlast Stimulus Program

By Alex Philippidis

NEW YORK (GenomeWeb News) – Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory says it expects to benefit from the stimulus funding it received through from[sic] the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, well past the program's end next year.

"For CSHL, the injection of ARRA funds has been very positive and will have an impact past the two years of the funding in that it is generating new data that will lead to new projects and new opportunities to pursue grant funding from public and private sources," a laboratory spokeswoman, Dagnia Zeidlickis, told *GenomeWeb Daily News* this week.

Philippidis A. (October 8, 2010). Cold Spring Harbor Lab Says Benefits of ARRA Funding Will Outlast Stimulus Program. *GenomeWeb Daily News*.

What Has ARRA Funding Meant to You?

If you have received ARRA funds, you need to tell Congress how the ARRA dollars are being spent. Fight disinformation and make the case for science!

Go to www.ascb.org/ARRA to tell your story. ■



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House of Representatives

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 1296

Congratulating the American Society for Cell Biology on its 50 years of service to the basic biomedical research community in the United States and around the world, as well as the public.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 2010

Mr. LANGEVIN (for himself and Mr. BILBRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the American Society for Cell Biology on its 50 years of service to the basic biomedical research community in the United States and around the world, as well as the public.

Whereas the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) was founded in 1960 to bring the varied facets of cell biology together;

Whereas the ASCB began with a charter membership of 744 and 50 years later has approximately 10,000 members in the United States and in 65 other nations around the world;

Whereas the annual ASCB scientific meeting is the largest cell biology scientific meeting in the world and is attended by as many as 10,000 scientists, students, exhibitors, and members of the scientific press;

Whereas attendees at ASCB Annual Meetings present the results of their own research and attend other presentations on cutting-edge advances in cell biology;

Whereas the ASCB publishes influential publications including the scientific journal *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, the quarterly journal *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, and the monthly *ASCB Newsletter*;

Whereas ASCB committees provide members with opportunities to advance research, further collaboration, improve biology education, attract, retain, and further the professional development of underrepresented minority and female scientists, communicate science to the public, educate government officials about science, and further career development for all scientists; and

Whereas the ASCB is proud to count among its members the recipients of many prestigious national and international scientific awards including National Academies of Science membership, Lasker Awards, and 24 Nobel Prizes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) congratulates the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) on its 50th anniversary of service to the basic biomedical research community;
- (2) recognizes and celebrates the work of legions of ASCB volunteers and dedicated staff;
- (3) expresses the gratitude of the United States people to the members of the basic biomedical research community for their contributions to the improvement of the health and well-being of the citizens of the Nation;
- (4) recognizes the role the ASCB and its members play in developing future generations of cell biologists and other life scientists, increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities in science, and mentoring women and early career scientists; and
- (5) recognizes the role the ASCB and its members play in communicating biomedical advances to the public and educating government officials in the development of science-based policies.

In April, U.S. Representative James Langevin (D-RI) and U.S. Representative Brian Bilbray (R-CA) introduced H. Res. 1296 in the U.S. House of Representatives. The resolution congratulates the ASCB on its 50 years of service to the basic biomedical research community in the U.S. and around the world, as well as to the public.

In a press release announcing the resolution's introduction, Representative Langevin said, "I am honored to sponsor this resolution. Their work advances research and promotes collaboration, all while challenging their member scientists to produce the best outcomes in the biomedical research field. It is this dedication to science that improves medical care and potential health outcomes for all of us."

The following Representatives joined Langevin and Bilbray in sponsoring the resolution:

- Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE)
- Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI)
- Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA)
- Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ)
- Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA)
- Rep. David Wu (D-OR)