

Eleventh-Hour FY11 Budget Deal Includes Cuts to NIH, NSF

The overall budget deal, agreed to about an hour before the U.S. government would have had to shut down, includes \$38.5 billion in cuts from the FY10 U.S. budget. The agreement includes a 0.2% across-the-board cut to all domestic programs. That government-wide cut, combined with the specific agency cuts, means the following

for the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF):

- 1% (-\$320 million) cut to FY11 NIH budget
- 3.6% (\$191 million) cut to FY11 NSF budget ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

ASCB Activists, Others Make a Difference

Have you ever wondered if writing to your representatives in the U.S. Congress matters? It does and we have the proof.

In the last month and a half of debate in Congress about the FY11 budget, more than 4,400 ASCB members and other members of the Coalition for the Life Sciences (CLS) contacted their U.S. Senators opposing deep cuts to the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). Other scientific societies also report large responses from their members.

There can be little doubt that this overwhelming response from the NIH

community had an impact. While the FY11 NIH budget was cut by 1%, it could have been far worse.

The battle over the FY12 budget is only going to get more difficult. Your voice is going to be critical once again. Join Project 50 or the Congressional Liaison Committee to ensure you have the latest information.

To join Project 50, go to www.ascb.org/Project50. You can become a member of the Congressional Liaison Committee at www.coalitionforlifesciences.org/be-an-advocate. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

ASCB Member, Others Go to the Hill

It is often said that timing is everything. For ASCB member Sara Szarowicz and 10 other scientists, the timing of their day in Washington, DC, for meetings with U.S. Senators, Members of Congress, and their staff, could not have been better. Szarowicz is co-chair of the ASCB Subcommittee on Postdoctoral Training (SCOPT).

The Hill Day, sponsored on April 13 by the Coalition for the Life Sciences (CLS), came at a critical time. The previous Friday, Congress and the President reached an eleventh-hour agreement on a budget for FY11 see story above. The Hill Day took place the day before a divided U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed the agreement, averting a government shutdown.

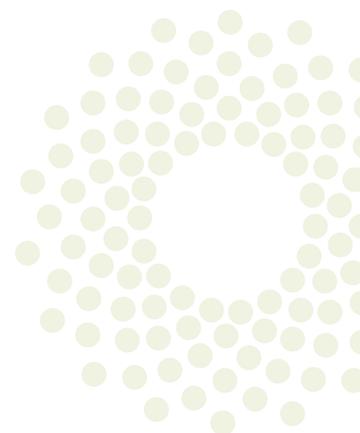
Unlike on previous trips to the Hill, Szarowicz and the other Hill Day participants

heard a more nuanced message of support for the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Along with expressing their support for the two agencies, congressional members and staff reminded Hill Day attendees that all areas of government would have to participate in fiscal belt-tightening.

In the middle of the group's meetings, U.S. President Barack Obama delivered his response to Republican plans to begin cutting the U.S. deficit as part of the FY12 federal budget. He detailed his strong support for continued federal investment in medical research.

For information on how you can participate in a CLS Hill Day, go to www.coalitionforlifesciences.org. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson



I'm a Big Fan—NOT!

During a recent U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee meeting, Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) claimed he might be the biggest supporter of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Congress. Less than 10 minutes after making that statement, Simpson voted against an effort to block the NIH from funding cuts in the FY12 budget.

Even before Congress finished the long-delayed FY11 budget, the House Budget Committee started the long process of developing a budget for FY12. Among many controversial components of the FY12 Budget Resolution, which will serve as the framework for the creation of the FY12 appropriations bills, is a freeze on spending for domestic discretionary programs at FY08 levels. This budget freeze would apply to the NIH and the National Science Foundation.

During Budget Committee consideration of the

FY12 Budget Resolution, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) introduced an amendment that would provide enough funding to make cuts to research conducted by the NIH unnecessary.

After a lengthy debate, the amendment was defeated on party lines by a vote of 15 yeas–22 nays. Even Committee members who opposed the Wasserman Schultz amendment, including Rep. Simpson, spoke glowingly of the NIH.

You can watch Rep. Wasserman Schultz's remarks about her amendment at: www.youtube.com/user/RepWassermanSchultz#p/u/0/PcBVh8xhFRs.

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You can watch the entire debate on the NIH amendment at www.c-spanvideo.org/program/ResolutionMarkupPa. The debate on the NIH amendment begins at the 1:42:07 mark and lasts about 15 minutes. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson



Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL; an NIH fan)

CLS Congressional Biomedical Research Caucuses Held



NIH Director Francis Collins met recently with members of the Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus, which is sponsored by the Coalition for the Life Sciences. Left to right: Collins spoke with Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA), who represents a significant life science area in San Diego, and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), who represents the life science research area in San Francisco.



The Coalition for the Life Sciences sponsored a spring Capitol Hill Day. This event was an opportunity for scientists across the country to meet with his or her members of Congress. Left to right: Laurence Eisenlohr, Thomas Jefferson University in Pennsylvania, is shown with his Congressman, Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA).