

IEEE-USA president urges Congress to pass competitiveness legislation

IEEE-USA President John Meredith urges the House and Senate to pass the conference report of the “America Competes Act” to help bolster our country’s global leadership in science and technology and promote U.S. competitiveness and innovation.

“We commend the conferees for recognizing the vital role that science and technology research and development plays in strengthening U.S. economic well-being, energy independence and national security,” Meredith said. “Our nation’s innovation infrastructure and ability to compete with emerging nations will greatly benefit from this legislation.”

The final version of the three-year, \$43.3 billion bill, based on H.R. 2272 and S. 761, passed Tuesday. The House is expected to vote on the measure today, the Senate on Friday.

The “America Competes Act” would, among other things, authorize significant funding increases for research and development; strengthen educational opportunities at the elementary through graduate school level in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; increase funds to improve the skills of math and science teachers; and provide college scholarships for hundreds of future math and science teachers. The bill puts research programs at the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of Energy on track to double their budgets during the next decade.

The legislation is based on recommendations contained in the National Academies’ “Rising Above the Gathering Storm” report and the Council on Competitiveness’ “Innovate America” report. Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and House Science and Technology Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.) led their respective chamber’s conference teams.

“Keeping America competitive will help us keep good jobs on our nation’s shores and ensure our ability to compete in a global marketplace,” Gordon said. “That process begins with a high-quality educational system and follows with ideas and investments in people here at home.”

Source: IEEE-USA

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