



**For Immediate Release
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**The Science Coalition's "Ten Questions" for the Presidential Debate:
*Where do the candidates stand on expanding our nation's commitment to basic research?***

As the ongoing financial crisis has clearly illustrated, the top priority for the next President will be addressing the nation's severe economic crisis. Believing that expanding the nation's commitment to basic scientific research is one of the most important actions the next President can take to ensure our long-term fiscal health, The Science Coalition today distributed 10 suggested questions (attached) to the moderator of tomorrow's presidential debate. Answers to the questions, which also have been provided to the presidential campaigns, will help voters understand the candidates' positions on a variety of issues related to federal support of basic scientific research.

How is basic research part of the solution to our economic problems? More than half of U.S. economic growth in the past 60 years can be traced to science-driven technological innovation. The source of much of this innovation was university-based scientific research, supported by the federal government – through institutions such as the National Institutes of Health, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and the National Science Foundation. Two examples will help make the connection. The U.S. biotech industry, a \$70 billion engine of growth, would not exist without a long background of basic research. The path-breaking findings that made recombinant DNA technology feasible were discovered at leading U.S. universities. University technology transfer overall adds billions of dollars to the economy each year. In 2006 alone, 553 new startup companies were launched as a result of university technology transfer.

More importantly, if the United States is to successfully address many of the challenges we face – from energy independence to climate change to health care to growing a workforce that will enable America to compete a global innovation economy – then it must invest in the basic research that will enable discovery and innovation.

Several of the attached questions relate to specific research areas, such as medical, national security, space, and energy and climate change. Others deal with particular policies, such as the America Competes Act and K-12 STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. All questions are designed to elicit from each candidate a sense of where his administration would stand on a range of critical issues relating to our nation's commitment to basic research.

The Science Coalition believes it is critical that the American people have a sense of the candidates' perspectives on basic scientific research, as their positions have implications that go far beyond the laboratory or the campus. A robust discussion about our federal commitment to scientific research would be of great service to voters.

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The Science Coalition, a non-profit organization representing 47 of the nation's leading public and private research universities, is dedicated to sustaining the federal government's commitment to U.S. leadership in basic science. For more information visit: www.sciencecoalition.org