

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEMBERS OF AMERICA'S RESEARCH COMMUNITY URGE CONGRESS: STOP THE SEQUESTER
Video Editorials Detail Threats to Promising Biomedical and Scientific Research, Next Generation of Innovators, and America's Technological Leadership

WASHINGTON, DC – With only a month remaining before the across-the-board cuts to the nation's discretionary spending known as the sequester take effect, researchers across the country are sending an urgent message to Congress: [Stop the sequester](#) or risk the loss of a generation of discoveries, cures, new companies and talent.

Their individual messages are part of a new initiative by [ScienceWorksForU.S.](#), a project of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and The Science Coalition (TSC) to inform policymakers and the public of the devastating impact that the upcoming budget sequester will have on federal funding for university research. Universities conduct the majority of basic scientific and medical research in the United States and, as such, are ground zero for the discovery and innovation that fuels the economy, as well as for the education of future scientists, engineers, doctors, teachers and entrepreneurs.

"We live in a global economy with a growing number of strong international competitors. If we pull back now from investing in our future we will lose ground that will be difficult – if not impossible – to regain," warns [Stephen Forrest](#), vice president for research at the University of Michigan.

Already a relatively small portion of the federal budget, research funding will be cut by nearly [\\$95 billion](#) over the next nine years under sequestration. These cuts are [in addition to](#) the tight caps on discretionary spending put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011, which will likely further reduce the funds available for research over the next decade.

"These cuts are not just a retreat from our nation's cutting edge research programs – they would directly impact opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to prepare for careers as the high tech innovators our nation needs to prosper. Join me in telling Congress to end the budget sequestration and invest in our future," says [Laurie Leshin](#), a former NASA scientist and dean of the College of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York State.

In labs across the United States work is being done that holds promise for many of the country's most difficult challenges, including finding treatments for debilitating diseases and finding ways to safely and effectively unleash new energy sources. The sequester would put this work on hold and in some cases already is having a chilling effect.

"I recently informed my post-doc that we can't keep him once the current grant expires," says [Earl Scime](#), chair of the Physics Department at West Virginia University. "Our latest grant proposal earned rave reviews, but the next phase of our research won't be funded. Sequestration means that there will be more of this on a larger scale."

The video editorials will be released throughout the month of February in an effort to impress upon lawmakers the importance of finding deficit reduction solutions that allow the country to continue to invest in basic scientific and medical research and other things that contribute to economic growth, security and health.

Other featured video editorials include:

[Mansoor Amiji](#) leads a team at Northeastern University in Massachusetts that is developing innovative cancer treatment methods with support from the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Sequestration would mean fewer researchers and less equipment, greatly slowing the progress of their work.

[Lucas Arzola's](#) company, Inserogen, is developing innovative solutions to vaccine production using tobacco plants. Federal research funding as a graduate student at University of California, Davis, enabled him to pursue the research leading to this new technology. If Congress does not act, other graduate students may not have the support they need to make the next big discovery.

[Daniel Colon-Ramos](#), a Yale cell biologist who is concerned that the work of his lab – funded largely by the NIH – could come to a “screeching halt.” The work of Colon-Ramos and his colleagues to understand the mechanisms of how the nerve system forms holds great implications for diseases such as autism, schizophrenia and epilepsy.

[Mo Khalil](#), an assistant professor at Boston University, is working at the intersection of engineering and molecular biology and his research has wide-ranging potential for health, energy and the environment. He is concerned that sequestration would have a devastating impact on the work of his lab.

[Patrick O'Shea](#), vice president for research at the University of Maryland, is trying to reassure students there that everything possible is being done to preserve research funding and the future of those who conduct research. He urges Congress to protect research students and ensure America's future by stopping the sequester.

[Ali Rezai, M.D.](#), whose NIH-funded work at The Ohio State University led to the development of brain pacemakers that now alleviate the suffering and vastly improve the quality of life of those with Parkinson's disease. He reminds policymakers that type of work requires steady, sustained funding.

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[ScienceWorksForUS](#) is a project of the Association of American Universities ([AAU](#)), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities ([APLU](#)) and the Science Coalition ([TSC](#)) to demonstrate the tremendous impact that federally funded university based research has on the nation and on the lives of all Americans, particularly the role it plays in improving health and spurring economic growth.

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