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Contact: Lauren Pulte
202-429-6875
lpulte@gga.com

Twenty-Eight Members of Congress Recognized for Commitment to Maintaining America's Leadership in Science and Innovation at Science Coalition "Breakfast of Champions"

Washington, D.C., May 8, 2013 – The Science Coalition today recognized 28 members of Congress for their support of funding for basic scientific research and commitment to keeping America at the forefront of biomedical and technological innovation. At a "Breakfast of Champions" on Capitol Hill, the group thanked these members for their leadership and urged them to help broaden the circle of members of Congress for whom federal investments in science are a priority.

The Science Coalition is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization of more than 50 U.S. research universities committed to maintaining a strong federal investment in basic scientific research. America's system of publicly funded research conducted at universities across the nation is at the root of virtually all of the major technological and medical innovations of the last half century, fueling as much as half of all U.S. economic growth since World War II and powering the nation to global preeminence in science.

"There is no question that the public benefit from federally funded research is exponentially greater than the original investment," said Susan Desmond-Hellmann, chancellor of the University of California, San Francisco. "Yet, our system of research only works when we have members of Congress who don't simply recognize its value, but who are also committed to providing the strong and sustained funding necessary for its proper functioning. That's why it's so important that we have members of Congress who are true Champions of Science."

The Science Coalition's Champion of Science Award recognizes members of Congress whose actions and votes consistently reflect their belief that basic scientific research, conducted at universities and national labs across the country, is essential to the nation's ability to address pressing issues in health, security, energy and the environment, and additionally, that a strong federally supported basic research enterprise drives innovation that fuels the U.S. economy. A distinguished group of more than 60 members of Congress have received the award since 1999; 28 recipients are currently in Congress.

"Each of you has been a vital leader in this cause," said Boston University President Robert A. Brown. "You have visited our campuses and talked with researchers, and you have educated your colleagues about the enormous payback from federal funding for research. You have formed partnerships across the aisle to maintain funding for America's premier research agencies, even in times of austerity, and to improve America's competitiveness through technological innovation and improved STEM education. Individually and together you are making a difference. You are true champions of science."

Beyond "thank you" a key theme at the event was the need to increase the number of members of Congress who will champion science.

“While the return on investment of federally funded research is all around us, current economic circumstances have led some to suggest that we can achieve similar success without strong federal input or that we can pull back for a few years without negative consequences,” said Washington State University President Elson S. Floyd. “We all know that won’t work. Let us today recommit to working together to help other members of Congress see that the way to build a better America is through a strong, federally funded research enterprise that drives innovation and economic growth.”

Northeastern University Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education Melvin Bernstein served as master of ceremonies for the event, which was attended by representatives from 50 of the nation’s leading research universities and featured exhibits by federally funded researchers. Each Champion of Science was presented a commemorative Wheaties® “Breakfast of Champions” box.

The Science Coalition’s Champions of Science are: Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA), Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Rep. John Duncan (R-TN), Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX), Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ), Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Rep. Randy Hultgren (R-IL), Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) , Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Rep. David Price (D-NC), Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS), Sen. John Rockefeller (D-WV), Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO), Rep. Pete Visclosky (D-IN), Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR).

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The Science Coalition, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization of the nation’s leading public and private research universities, is dedicated to sustaining strong federal funding of basic scientific research as a means to stimulate the economy, spur innovation and drive America’s global competitiveness. Learn more at www.sciencecoalition.org.