



Hon. Doris O. Matsui

Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui

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House Adopts Congresswoman Matsui's Amendment to Provide Communications Training for Scientists

"If scientists can't tell the rest of us what they've discovered, we are not fully realizing the benefits of our investment in scientific research."

Washington, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) successfully amended the National Science Foundation Authorization Act (H.R. 1867) to include a communications training initiative for science graduate students. This program will improve the ability of scientists to convey the relevance and importance of scientific research and technical topics to policymakers, business leaders, and other non-scientists.

"The National Science Foundation Authorization Act was already an excellent bill, keeping the NSF on track to double its budget and moving forward with Speaker Pelosi's innovation agenda," said Congresswoman Matsui. "My amendment adds an important new element by ensuring that our scientists will be equipped with the communications skills to make their expertise and perspective accessible to regular people who don't have a technical background. Because if scientists can't tell the rest of us what they've discovered, we are not fully realizing the benefits of our investment in scientific research."

Congresswoman Matsui's amendment creates a competitively-awarded supplement within an established NSF program, the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT). Graduate students at IGERT-awardee institutions would compete for resources to develop and implement communications training. Congresswoman Matsui's amendment was adapted from a bill that she introduced earlier this year, the Scientific Communications Act of 2007 (H.R. 1453).

"You should not need a PhD to utilize the ideas and breakthroughs that NSF-supported research produces," continued Congresswoman Matsui. "The program I've proposed will help to bridge the communications gap between scientists and the rest of us."

The National Science Foundation Authorization Act provides \$21 billion for the agency for fiscal years 2008 through 2010. In doing so, it establishes a path to double National Science Foundation funding by 2017. This was a key recommendation of the highly-respected National Academy's report on U.S. competitiveness, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm." The bill also creates a pilot program targeted at new investigators designed to bring more talented young people into scientific research fields. Finally, the bill directs NSF to facilitate public-private partnerships, a proven method of leveraging federal investment and bolstering American competitiveness.

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