

Eric Van Stryland
President
Optical Society of America
Testimony on Department of Education
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
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Chairman Regula, Ranking Member Obey and other members of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Optical Society of America (OSA). **We urge your subcommittee to allocate at least \$562.2 million for math and science education at the Department of Education.**

OSA brings together an international network of the industry's preeminent optics and photonics scientists, engineers, educators, technicians and business leaders. Representing over 14,000 members from more than 80 different countries, OSA promotes the worldwide generation, application and dissemination of optics and photonics knowledge through its meetings, events and journals. Since its founding in 1916, OSA member benefits, programming, publications, products and services have set the industry's standard of excellence.

Mr. Chairman, the OSA recognizes that strong math and science programs at all levels of education, from K-12 to higher education, are vital to our nation's long-term prosperity, global competitiveness and homeland security. Recent reports such as the National Academies of Science's *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* indicate that our nation's future competitiveness in the global marketplace is directly tied to the ability of our schools to prepare children for the technological economy of the 21st century. Both Congress and the Administration have responded to this and other reports by introducing bold, new packages that would create and fine-tune existing math and science education programs at various agencies.

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Department of Education Budget Request, President Bush has proposed \$562.2 million to strengthen math and science education. Of this amount, \$380 million would be dedicated to proposals under his new American Competitiveness Initiative which seeks to strengthen the capacity of our schools to improve K-12 math and science instruction. Additionally, the President has requested \$182.2 million for the Math and Science Partnerships. The program is designed to spread funding to every state, distributed by a formula based on student population and poverty level to promote math and science literacy. We urge your subcommittee to allocate *at least* \$562.2 million for math and science education at the Department of Education. Furthermore, we urge Congress and the Administration to work together to come up with the best proposals to utilize this funding in an effort to train our nation's future science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workers.

Chairman Regula, we greatly appreciate your past support of STEM education programs, in particular your championing increases in the Math and Science Partnership program. We applaud you for your dedication and urge you to continue your hard work on behalf of STEM programs as your subcommittee crafts its FY 2007 bill.