June 24, 2008

The Honorable Bart Gordon Chairman House Committee on Science and Technology 2321 Rayburn House Office Building United States House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515

## Dear Chairman Gordon:

As leaders in the science, engineering, education, and women's communities, we are writing you to voice our support of H.R. 6314, Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Act of 2008 recently introduced by Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas. We believe that H.R. 6314 is a crucial step to ensuring that women scientists and engineers are able to envision a career path that allows them to reach their full intellectual potential so that they may make significant contributions to scientific innovations in the U.S. and worldwide. We also applaud the House Science and Technology Committee's leadership and foresight in holding hearings related to this topic earlier this year.

In its 2007 report, *Beyond Bias and Barriers*, the National Academies state that, to maintain its scientific and engineering leadership amid increasing economic and educational globalization, the United States must aggressively pursue the innovative capacity of all of its people—women and men. While women make up almost half of the U.S. workforce, they continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions, particularly in the higher academic faculty ranks and leadership positions.

Unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures are hindering the access and advancement of women in science and engineering. Improving the policies within federal agencies and academic institutions to eliminate gender biases against women in STEM will help ensure that the U.S. remains the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the  $21^{st}$  century. Therefore, we strongly endorse the provisions under H.R. 6314, which authorize workshops to educate program officers, members of grant review panels, institution of higher education department chairs, and other federally funded researchers about methods that minimize the effects of gender bias in evaluation.

We also support the legislation's development of a uniform policy for extended research grant support and interim technical staff support for caregivers; the collection and annual reporting by the research-funding agencies, such as the Department of Energy (DOE) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), of standardized information on the agency's grant recipients' demographics, field, award type, budget request, review score, and funding outcome; and the public recognition of higher education science and engineering departments who participate in the aforementioned workshops.

As dedicated organizations working to improve diversity in our nation's STEM professions, we strongly support this bill, which has the potential to reduce the barriers to success for women scientists and engineers in STEM careers. We are committed to working with you, your staff, and Representative Johnson's office to ensure the enactment of this bill, which is designed to expand the talent pool by tapping into the full creativity of all our people.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Janet Bandows Koster, Executive Director, Association for Women in Science, at 202-326-8944 or Melissa Carl, Washington Representative, Society of Women Engineers, at 202-785-7380.

## Sincerely,

American Chemical Society

American Gastroenterological Association

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics

American Mathematical Society

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers

American Society of Plant Biologists

American Statistical Association

ASME Center for Leadership and Diversity

Anita Borg Institute for Women

Association for Psychological Science

Association of Women Geoscientists

Association for Women in Science

Biomedical Engineering Society

Center for Inquiry

Council on Undergraduate Research

Ecological Society of America

The Expanding Your Horizon Network

International Technology Education Association

*National Center for Optics and Photonics Education (OP-TEC)* 

National Center for Women and Information Technology

National Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science

National Science Teachers Association

Ohio Technology Education Association

Pathways into Science

Society for Research in Child Development

Society for Women's Health Research

Society of Women Engineers

Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education

University of Pittsburgh

WAGE (We Advocate Gender Equity)