

UPDATE - The SMART Grant program was passed last year as part of the Budget Reconciliation package.

November 2, 2005

VIA EMAIL AND FACSIMILE

The Honorable William Frist, M.D.
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate 416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

As members of the "Tapping America's Potential" (TAP) Forum, a group of 15 prominent business and technology associations committed to the improvement of math and science education in the United States, we are writing to express our support for the National SMART - Science and Math Action to Retain Talent - Grant. By making additional grant dollars available for the study of math, science, engineering and technology, you have recognized the critical importance that graduating more students in these fields has to America's ability to remain competitive and the leader in innovation and technology.

In order to succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, America cannot continue to rely on having access to foreign talent. Our foreign competitors have stepped up their efforts to attract and retain the world's best and brightest minds. Some experts predict that if current trends continue, more than 90 percent of all scientists and engineers in the world will be living in Asia by 2010. America must cultivate the skilled scientists and engineers needed to create tomorrow's innovations. We must be able to rely on domestic sources of talent in order to sustain our economic strength and technological preeminence.

Recognizing this critical need for implementing effective strategies for cultivating domestic talent, the TAP Forum issued the July 2005 report, "Tapping America's Potential: The Education for Innovation Initiative." The report outlines a broad game plan to build math and science expertise in the United States with the overall goal of doubling the number of graduates in these fields by 2015. The SMART Grant is a step in the right direction toward meeting this goal.

By making supplemental grant dollars available to all Pell-eligible college students who major in math, science, engineering and technology, this program provides direct and immediate incentives for pursuing degrees in fields necessary to maintaining America's ability to remain competitive. The program also encourages more students in groups underrepresented in the science and technology sectors - especially minority and low-income students - to pursue careers in these critical fields. Overall, the National SMART grant will make a significant impact in helping America meet its most critical long-term economic and security needs.

Again, we support the National SMART Grant and applaud your recognition of the important role that the fields of math, science, engineering and technology play in securing a stronger and more prosperous America.

Sincerely,

William T. Archey
President & CEO
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