



July 17, 2019

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Russell Vought  
Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Secretary Mnuchin, Acting Director Vought, Speaker Pelosi, and Leaders McCarthy, McConnell, and Schumer:

On behalf of nearly all the nation's major research universities, we strongly urge Congress and the administration to work together to negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement to raise the discretionary spending caps for fiscal years FY2020 and FY2021 and avoid the harmful consequences of budget sequestration. Raising the caps is critical to ensuring adequate federal investments in scientific research, student aid, and other higher education programs can continue to contribute to our country's economic and national security.

As the new Task Force on American Innovation report [\*Benchmarks 2019: Second Place America? Increasing Challenges to US Scientific Leadership\*](#) clearly indicates, our nation's competitive edge is now at stake as China and other countries rapidly increase their research and workforce development investments. Other countries are racing forward while our nation risks falling behind, mired in dysfunctional budget cycles that harm our nation's innovation ecosystem.

With less than 19 combined legislative days remaining until the new fiscal year, we urge you to reach a bipartisan agreement this month. An agreement to raise the caps would provide additional resources to meet the country's significant investment needs, including increased funding to help revitalize the government-university partnership in areas such as: the Department of Defense's 6.1 basic research, DARPA, and other science and technology programs; the National Institutes of Health; the National Science Foundation; the Department of Energy's Office of Science and Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy; NASA; the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and the Department of Education's Pell Grants and other federal student aid programs, graduate and Title VI international education programs, and the Institute for Education Sciences.

The research university community is grateful for past actions to not only lift the Budget Control Act's harmful discretionary caps, but to also provide additional resources to meet the country's significant investment needs. We now urge you to do the same. We strongly support an agreement that creates job growth while avoiding an innovation deficit as we cannot afford to compromise our nation's economic and national security interests.

Thank you for considering our views. If we can provide any additional assistance, please contact Matt Owens ([matt.owens@aaup.edu](mailto:matt.owens@aaup.edu)) and Craig Lindwarm ([clindwarm@aplup.org](mailto:clindwarm@aplup.org)).

Sincerely,



Mary Sue Coleman  
President  
Association of American Universities



Peter McPherson  
President  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities