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Business leaders agree: Federal funding for basic research enhances prosperity, security and well-being

PHILADELPHIA – More than three dozen CEOs and other top executives of some of the leading, best-known U.S. businesses publicly argued today that federal funding for basic scientific research is an investment in Americans’ prosperity, security and quality of life.

The statement signed by 39 business leaders was published this morning as a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal. It also ran as a full-page ad in the New York Times on Monday, September 26. The ad can be [found here](#).

“Business leaders agree: Federal funding of basic scientific research is an investment in our prosperity, security and well-being,” the group wrote.

Without basic research, the leaders said, we would be without some essential technologies that connect us, protect us, and power our world. Without it, we would not have the internet and smartphones, the hepatitis B vaccine and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), solar panels, microprocessors and the Global Positioning System (GPS).

The signatories include Wanda Austin, president and CEO, Aerospace Corporation; Eric Schmidt, executive chairman, Alphabet, and former CEO of Google; Charles Munger, vice chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Corporation; John Watson, CEO, Chevron; Larry J. Merlo, president and CEO, CVS Health; Mary T. Barra, chairman and CEO, General Motors; Meg Whitman, president and CEO, Hewlett Packard Enterprise; Norm Augustine, former CEO, Lockheed Martin Corporation; Steve Mollenkopf, CEO, Qualcomm Incorporated; Thomas J. Falk, chairman and CEO, Kimberly-Clark; William S. Demchak, chairman, president and CEO, PNC Financial Services Group; and Roger Ferguson, president and CEO, TIAA.

The initiative emerged from a meeting at the Annenberg Retreat at [Sunnylands](#) in February 2016 that was convened by Robert Bradway, CEO of Amgen, and Subra Suresh, president of Carnegie Mellon University and former director of the National Science Foundation. It was organized by [Kathleen Hall Jamieson](#), program director of Sunnylands and director of the [Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) of the University of Pennsylvania. The ads are sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center’s program in the Science of Science Communication.

The participants at the retreat voiced concern that the importance of federal funding for basic scientific research not be lost in broader debates about budget priorities.

“The ecosystem for innovation in the U.S., which pairs academic research with private industry investment, is unrivaled anywhere in the world,” noted Bradway. “Government funding of

research is a critical component, and one which we must sustain if we are to preserve our role as the global leader in innovation.”

“Support of basic research, primarily funded by the federal government with a significant boost from the private sector, has played a pivotal role in the emergence of the United States as the undisputed innovation leader since the end of World War II,” Suresh said. “This support has served as an engine of economic prosperity and national security, leading to world-changing technologies, tens of millions of high-quality jobs, Nobel Prize-winning discoveries, and the creation of American companies with a global footprint.”

Jamieson added, “Without basic research, many of us would literally be lost: We would not have smartphones, the internet and GPS.”

Join the business leaders in expressing support: #FundBasicResearch.

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