



CRA

Computing Research
Association

June 27, 2016

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Senators Gardner and Peters,

As an organization representing over 240 industry and academic institutions involved in computing research and six affiliated professional societies, the Computing Research Association is pleased to support your efforts to bolster Federal innovation policy and American competitiveness through the *American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (S. 3084)*. We believe the bill represents a reaffirmation of the importance of key elements of the nation's science and technology enterprise, including the strength of the merit-review process at the National Science Foundation, and the importance of the Federal Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) program.

Indeed, we are pleased to see a number of provisions in the bill reflect the importance of Federal investments in computing research. As you are aware, advances in information technology are transforming all aspects of our lives. Virtually every human endeavor today has been touched by information technology, including commerce, education, employment, health care, energy, manufacturing, governance, national security, communications, the environment, entertainment, science and engineering. The profound reach of IT is enabled in large part by the innovations that spawn from the IT research ecosystem – that incredibly productive, yet complex interplay of industry, universities and the Federal government. Indeed, nearly every sub-sector of the IT economy today bears the stamp of Federal support. The program responsible for overseeing this crucial investment is NITRD.

We believe this Act makes the NITRD program stronger by improving the planning and coordination of the National Coordination Office for NITRD, requiring that the NCO and the NITRD agencies engage in strategic planning, and requiring the periodic review and assessment of the program contents and funding. All have been recommendations of the President's Council of Advisors for Science and Technology in their recent reviews of the program.



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We are also pleased to note that you plan to amend the bill during its markup to include an increase to the funding authorizations for NSF and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Last year, CRA joined with more than 500 companies, universities, and national business, science and university organizations in endorsing "[Innovation: An American Imperative](#)," which called on Congress and the Administration to provide at least four-percent real annual increases in funding for key research agencies, including NSF and NIST. The amendment under consideration would meet this target for FY 2018. We would urge that you and your colleagues on the committee continue your strong support of the U.S. innovation ecosystem, fueled in part by this Federal investment, and adopt it.

We thank you for your work on this legislation and for your long-standing support of the Federal investment in research, particularly in computing. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues as you endeavor to move the legislation forward this session.

Sincerely,

Susan B Davidson

Susan B. Davidson
Chair, Board of Directors