

The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of
IMMUNOLOGISTS



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August 28, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer McClellan
2417 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. McClellan:

I am writing on behalf of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) to express support for your recently introduced legislation, the Relieving Economic Strain to Enhance American Resilience and Competitiveness in Higher Education and Research (RESEARCHER) Act. AAI is pleased to endorse this important effort to provide greater economic security to our nation's graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

AAI, which was founded in 1913, is the nation's largest professional association of research scientists and physicians who are dedicated to understanding the immune system through basic, translational, and clinical research. AAI members have made enormous contributions to understanding the transmission of infectious diseases and developing effective methods to prevent and treat them, as well as to understanding the immunological basis of cancer and developing cancer immunotherapies. Immunologists are also actively engaged in critically important research to, among many other challenges, understand and better treat debilitating autoimmune diseases, discover new defenses against antibiotic resistant bacteria, and develop new and improved treatments to prevent the rejection of transplanted organs and bone marrow.

The AAI membership includes approximately 2,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. AAI is aware of the many challenges these early career researchers are facing including insufficient compensation, inadequate benefits, and uncertain future career prospects. These concerns and more were articulated in AAI [comments](#) submitted to the National Institutes of Health in April. Addressing these challenges is crucial to maintaining a strong biomedical research pipeline. It is imperative, however, for Congress to appropriate new funding to help solve these issues, as reallocating existing funds could disadvantage many meritorious researchers at other career stages.

Thank you again for introducing this important legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact AAI Director of Government Affairs Jake Schumacher (jschumacher@aai.org) or me if AAI can be of any assistance on this or any other issue.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Diehl, Ph.D.
Chair, AAI Committee on Public Affairs