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IMMUNOLOGISTS



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July 29, 2014

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland
Security & Governmental Affairs
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Coburn:

I am writing on behalf of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), the largest professional association of basic and clinical immunologists in the world. AAI is concerned that S. 1347, the *Conference Accountability Act of 2013* - despite improvements contained in the Coburn-Heitkamp substitute - would codify and potentially exacerbate the already negative impact of existing regulations restricting federal spending on, and employee travel to, scientific meetings and conferences.

On January 14, 2014, AAI submitted testimony to this committee for inclusion in the record for your hearing on "Examining Conference and Travel Spending Across the Federal Government." This testimony, which is attached, explains our concerns in greater detail. Briefly, as we stated in our March 29, 2012, testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, AAI believes the following:

"Government scientists are valued members of our organization and contribute significantly to scientific advancement in the field. It is as important to AAI to have them attend our meeting as it is for them to attend. Dialogue and information exchange among scientists from government, academia, industry and private institutes is absolutely essential, and any barriers to the participation of government scientists undermines [sic] the best interests of science."

In summary, we urge you to postpone consideration of S. 1347 and work with the scientific community to ensure that government scientists can participate fully in the collaborative and educational activities that advance the scientific enterprise. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if AAI can be of assistance to you on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren G. Gross".

Lauren G. Gross, J.D.

Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs
The American Association of Immunologists