

January 30, 2006

Remarks – State of the Union Listening Session
Congresswoman Betty McCollum

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- I am not here as a partisan exercise or expression
- I am here to speak out on behalf of current and future students and institutions who serve them
- Both the Budget Reconciliation Resolution and the Reauthorization Bills are flawed instruments laying bare the dysfunctions of both the Congress and current administration. The following questions should be put to each legislator prior to voting:
 1. Will this legislation improve our economic competitiveness for the future?
 2. Will this legislation increase the intellectual capital of the U.S.?
 3. Will this legislation enhance the research capacity of our most important research universities?
 4. Will this legislation improve our understanding of other cultures, ability to speak other languages, understanding of other business practices?
 5. Will this legislation help close both the learning gaps and the income disparities in our culture?
 6. Does this legislation share the sacrifice fairly among generations and within socio-economic strata?
 7. How does this proposed approach compare to our major international competitors?

Summary of the challenge from Rising Above the Gathering Storm – prepared for the U.S. Senate by the National Academy of Sciences:

It is easy to be complacent about U.S. competitiveness and pre-eminence in science and technology. We have led the world for decades, and we continue to do so in many research fields today. But the world is changing rapidly, and our advantages are no longer unique. Without a renewed effort to bolster the foundations of our competitiveness, we can expect to lose our privileged position. For the first time in generations, the nation's children could face poorer prospects than their parents and grandparents did. We owe our current prosperity, security, and good health to the investments of past generations, and we are obliged to renew those commitments in education, research, and innovation policies to ensure that the American people continue to benefit from the remarkable opportunities provided by the rapid development of the global economy and its not inconsiderable underpinning in science and technology.

Source: Rising Above the Gathering Storm, National Academy of Sciences 2005