Statement of Juliane Baron, Executive Director, Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences on the FY 2020 Appropriations for the National Science Foundation submitted for the record to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Honorable Jose Serrano, Chairman
Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member

April 4, 2019

Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt, and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony for the record in support of the National Science Foundation budget for fiscal year 2020. FABBS represents twenty-three scientific societies and nearly sixty university departments whose members and faculty share a commitment to advancing knowledge of the mind, brain, and behavior. Understanding the human element of our most pressing challenges through research in these sciences will improve the welfare of our nation, our society, and our people. Fundamental research funded by the NSF helps to create a body of knowledge and build future generations of scientists whose work will be essential in keeping this country at the forefront of discovery. As a member of the Coalition for National Science Funding, FABBS joins the broader scientific community in urging Congress to fund the NSF at $9 billion in FY 2020.

Our members sincerely thank the CJS Appropriations Subcommittee for the final budget level for the NSF in FY 2019, a significant and deeply needed increase over FY 2018. While we recognize that the Subcommittee worked diligently to pass a timely budget for the NSF, we feel obligated to mention the wastefulness of the extended shut down. We thank you in advance for your efforts to complete the FY 2020 budget before the end on the fiscal year. Together with our sister scientific societies, we have and will continue to bring attention to the devastating effects of shutting down the NSF.

In addition to continually strengthening core research to generate discovery and train and inspire those individuals doing the discovering, the NSF funds critical infrastructure to sustain and grow the nation’s scientific enterprise. We applaud the NSF for encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation through the launch of its Big Ideas and Convergence Accelerators and agree strongly with their position that funding for these new initiatives can not come at the expense of continued increased funding for core discipline research in any of the research directorates. Indeed, the National Science Board has estimated that in FY2017, nearly $4 billion in grants evaluated by the NSF merit review process to be “very good or higher” were left unpursued due to lack of funding. We are, potentially, in a period of tremendous growth and discovery. We need to be thinking about attracting the next
This committee has expressed a commitment to enable the U.S. to maintain its leadership status in science and technology in an increasingly competitive global economy. However, the NSF has not received the same budget increases as other major research agencies during the same time period. Furthermore, funding for the NSF has remained stagnant at a time period when we are seeing rapid growth in federal investment in research and development from our global competitors. Increasing federal support for the NSF is vital in order to ensure the health, security, and economic well-being of our nation.

In addition to receiving support from the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences, FABBS members appreciate critical funding from the Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) and Biological Sciences (BIO) Directorates as well as the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate.

The SBE directorate provides an estimated 62 percent of the federal funding for fundamental research in SBE sciences at academic institutions across the country. This means that our finest universities and colleges are heavily dependent on the NSF to inform discoveries from identifying vulnerabilities in the nation’s cyber-networks to improving early detection and treatment of brain disorders such as autism and Alzheimer’s. The discoveries fueled by fundamental SBE research provide a foundational understanding of human thought, feeling, and behavior that is critical for making advances in several of the NSF’s Big Ideas — including harnessing the data revolution, the future of work at the human-technology frontier, and building an inclusive community of STEM learners. An increase in the NSF’s 2020 budget would allow the agency to continue funding core disciplinary research, as well as invest in the Big Ideas.

We recognize the pressing need to raise the budget caps. Accordingly, we have been working in collaboration with the broad scientific society as well as with federal, state and local colleagues in health, education, and hundreds of other groups affected by non-defense discretionary funding to encourage members of Congress to raise the caps so that we can complete the budget process keep our government working.

Increasing federal investment in fundamental scientific research across all sciences is critical to ensuring the prosperity, security and health of our nation and its people. Thus, we urge you to provide the National Science Foundation with $9 billion for FY 2020. Along with the broader scientific community, we believe that increased funding for fundamental scientific research would help set the NSF on a solid path with potentially transformative benefits to the country.

Thank you for considering this request.
FABBS Member Societies:

FABBS Affiliates:
APA Division 1: The Society for General Psychology; APA Division 3: Experimental Psychology; APA Division 7: Development Psychology; APA Division 28: Psychopharmacology and Substance Abuse; Arizona State University; Boston College-Psychology; Boston University- Psychology; California State University at Fullerton- Psychological and Brain Sciences; Carnegie Mellon University- Psychology; Cornell University- Psychology; Duke University- Psychology and Neuroscience; Florida State University- Psychology; Georgetown University- Psychology; George Washington University- Psychology; Georgia Institute of Technology- Psychology; Harvard University- Psychology; Indiana University Bloomington- Psychology; Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis- Psychology; Johns Hopkins University- Psychological and Brain Sciences; Kent State University- Psychological Sciences; Lehigh University- Psychology; New York University- Psychology; Northeastern University- Psychology; Northwestern University- Psychology; Ohio State University- Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences; Pennsylvania State University- Psychology; Princeton University- Psychology; Purdue University- Psychological Sciences; Rice University- Psychology; Southern Methodist University- Psychology; Stanford University- Psychology; Syracuse University- Psychology; Temple University- Psychology; University of Arizona- Psychology; University of California at Berkeley- Psychology; University of California at Davis- Psychology; University of California at Los Angeles- Psychology; University of California at San Diego- Psychology; University of Chicago- Psychology; University of Cincinnati- Psychology; University of Delaware- Psychological & Brain Sciences; University of Houston- Psychology; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign- Psychology; University of Iowa- Psychological and Brain Sciences; University of Maryland at College Park- Psychology; University of Massachusetts at Amherst- Psychological and Brain Sciences; University of Michigan- Psychology; University of Minnesota- Psychology; University of Minnesota- Institute of Child Development; University of North Carolina at Greensboro- Psychology; University of Pennsylvania- Psychology University of Pittsburgh- Psychology; University of Texas at Austin- Psychology; University of Texas at Dallas- School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences; University of Virginia- Psychology; University of Washington- Psychology, Vanderbilt University- Psychological Sciences; Virginia Tech- Psychology; Wake Forest University- Psychology; Washington University in St. Louis- Psychology