

**Statement of Juliane Baron, Executive Director
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences**

**FY 2024 Appropriations for the National Institutes of Health, Advanced Research Projects
Agency in Health, and the Institute of Education Sciences**

submitted for the record to

**the United States House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies**

Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chairman and Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member

March 23, 2024

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

The Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS) is grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record in support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Advanced Research Projects Agency in Health (ARPA-H) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). FABBS represents twenty-nine scientific societies and almost sixty university departments whose members and faculty share a commitment to advancing knowledge of the mind, brain, and behavior. For fiscal year (FY) 2024, FABBS encourages your subcommittee to provide the NIH with a budget of at least \$50.924 billion and the IES, within the Department of Education, a budget of \$900 million. FABBS also requests strong funding for ARPA-H, in addition to robust funding for NIH.

National Institutes of Health

FABBS members contribute to the NIH mission of seeking fundamental knowledge about the behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. FABBS thanks the Subcommittee for the consistent increases to NIH in recent years. As a member of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research and the Coalition for Health Funding, FABBS recommends at least \$50.924 billion for NIH in FY 2024 and suggests that any funding for other targeted programs supplement the base budget, rather than supplant the essential foundational investment in the NIH.

- **Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR)**

FABBS members are especially supportive of the OBSSR and appreciative for the growth to the Office's baseline budget that enables consistent and reliable funding to provide essential support across NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs). OBSSR coordinates and promotes basic, clinical, and translational behavioral and social science research at NIH and plays an essential role enhancing trans-NIH investments in longitudinal datasets, technology in support of behavior change, innovative research methodologies, and promoting the inclusion of behavioral science in initiatives in partnership with ICs. OBSSR co-funds highly rated grants that the ICs cannot fund alone. OBSSR is able to efficiently leverage investments across the NIH to broadly improve the quality and effectiveness of federally funded research.

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**

FABBS members are particularly interested in NIMH, which serves as the premier federal agency responsible for developing a deeper understanding of and effective

interventions to improve mental health and treat mental illness. We appreciate the bipartisan commitment to mental health, and request robust funding for NIMH in FY 2024 commensurate with any increase to the overall NIH budget, so that the institute can build upon the significant achievements to advance the behavioral, biomedical, and social research mission and important initiatives to provide new insights and solutions to all. To fully capitalize on these bipartisan committee priorities and improve the mental health of all Americans, we recommend that the committee continue to prioritize investments in the NIMH. FABBS applauds the Administration's proposal for a \$200 million increase for NIMH, to a total request of \$2.542 billion. The additional funds would expand research on youth mental health, precision psychiatry, and COVID-19 as a risk factor for those with serious mental illness.

• Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

As a member of the Friends of NICHD, FABBS recommends increasing the NICHD in FY 2024 in a way that is commensurate with any increase to the overall NIH budget. NICHD has facilitated significant advances in brain and behavioral research with far reaching implications for public health, maternal, child, and family health, and learning and language development. For example, NICHD-funded researchers have recently:

- Found characteristics of the cries of preterm infants that may help predict their risk for long-term developmental and behavioral problems. The findings may lead to tools to identify babies at the highest risk for such issues, aiding early treatment or prevention efforts.

- Determined that depression may be a risk factor for problematic social media use, to the point of it interfering with daily functions of both children and adults.

Nonetheless, NICHD needs additional funding for a range of topics including behavioral research on child developmental trajectories, across infancy, childhood, and adolescence, in both at-risk and normative environments, across diverse contexts and including underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)

FABBS is pleased to see the progress at ARPA-H and encourages the Subcommittee to continue to ensure that additional appropriations for the Agency supplement, rather than supplant, funding for NIH. We are eager to see how this new agency will effectively take a cross-disciplinary approach to questions that are challenging to address in the current organizational approach of NIH.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education

We are grateful for the Subcommittee's work to ensure a funding increase for IES over the past few fiscal years. As members of the Friends of IES, FABBS encourages the subcommittee to appropriate at least \$900 million to IES in FY 2024. This funding level will allow the Institute to build on the FY 2023 enacted budget to maximize its capacity to advance innovative research, develop the methodological skills of education researchers, and continue to support high-quality and trustworthy statistics and evidence-based resources. The National Academies of Science,

Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) recommendations for the future of education research provide an exciting path forward for the agency, outlining approaches to make progress in issues of critical importance to education policy and practice and improve learner outcomes for all students. However, the report finds that “Given the breadth of what IES is expected to accomplish as mandated in ESRA [the Education Sciences Reform Act], its funding for both programmatic activities and staffing has historically been limited in comparison to other federal science, research, and statistical agencies with similar objectives [and] in order to achieve the overarching vision presented through these recommendations, IES will require additional investments.” An increase in funding for FY24 would bolster the necessary education research and data infrastructure to address emerging and persistent challenges in education.

Thank you for considering this testimony.