



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

S. 2014/H.R. 3466 NEXT GENERATION RESEARCHERS ACT

NIH-supported research has led to remarkable breakthroughs that improve health, save lives, and create jobs. However, current policies are putting the brakes on research and innovation. Since 2003, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget has failed to keep up with inflation, decreasing the purchasing power of the NIH by over twenty two percent, while our global competitors accelerate their research capabilities. Over the past four decades, the average age of a young researcher receiving his or her first NIH grant has increased from 38 to 45. During the same time period, the percentage of research grants with a principal investigator under age 36 has declined from 18 percent to 3 percent. This trend is devastating to our nation's young researchers and has contributed to a stagnation in our research workforce.

The AAOS recognizes that scientific and medical innovation depends on our ability to foster, support, and invest in the next generation of clinician investigators and basic scientists. The AAOS supports the efforts of the Next Generation Researchers Act to build opportunities for new researchers, and invest in the future of research, science, and innovation.

The Next Generation Researchers Act Will:

- **Coordinate efforts for the next generation of researchers within the NIH:** This legislation authorizes the creation of the Next Generation of Research Initiative within the NIH Office of the Director, which will be charged with directing all current and new NIH policies aimed at promoting new researchers.
- **Promote current and new policies aimed at improving opportunities for young scientists:** Current NIH policies that have helped early-stage investigators (ESI) include the Pathway to Independence Award, the NIH Director's New Innovator Award, and the ESI grant review procedures which ensure new investigators have a fair shot to succeed. New policies will include implementing the recommendations provided by the NIH Office of Extramural Research, improving mentorship between veteran and new researchers, expanding workforce diversity efforts, and exploring ways to improve success in applying for a new researcher's second grant.
- **Conduct a comprehensive study on the best possible ways our country can establish the next generation of research:** This legislation would direct the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to produce a report to evaluate barriers for entry into biomedical research for early-stage scientists and new investigators. The study will evaluate legislative, administrative, educational, and cultural barriers to providing for a strong, diverse next generation of researchers.

AAOS' Recommendation:

Congress should support S. 2014/H.R. 3466, the Next Generation Researchers Act.

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