

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Edward Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Markey, Tillis, Peters, and Collins,

On behalf of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), I write in support of S.289, the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act. We commend your bipartisan work to reintroduce legislation supporting investments in our country's research and development (R&D) enterprise during this time of continued uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For nearly six decades, CGS has served as the national organization dedicated to advancing graduate education and research. Our membership includes nearly 500 institutions of higher education in the United States, Canada, and abroad. Collectively, our members grant 87 percent of all U.S. doctorates and the majority of U.S. master's degrees. This legislation invests in the graduate students, postdocs, and principal investigators who are conducting scientific discoveries that touch the lives of Americans daily.

The RISE Act offers graduate students and postdocs the ability to complete critical work and training that COVID-19 has disrupted. Our members have witnessed first-hand the disruptions in campus laboratories and with research staff and personnel. For example, faculty members are expending financial resources necessary to keep labs open at a rate that will limit their ability to accept student and postdoc researchers moving forward. Therefore, the RISE Act's supplemental funding is a lifeline for current graduate students and recent graduates to engage in the research necessary for their careers and our research enterprise. This bill creates opportunities for many of these researchers for up to two years, ensuring they can conduct their work. The RISE Act supports not only students' involvement in critical R&D but also our nation's economic recovery and lasting growth.

CGS also applauds the utilization of funds to research the effects of COVID-19 and the effectiveness of the strategies used to combat the disease. These grants provide colleges and universities the opportunity to increase research that enhances our nation's preparedness for the next possible pandemic. Graduate students and postdocs beginning careers as researchers and scientists will have the ability to contribute valuable discoveries and gain critical experience due to this additional funding.

AFFILIATES

Conference
of Southern
Graduate Schools

Midwestern
Association
of Graduate Schools

Northeastern
Association
of Graduate Schools

Western
Association
of Graduate Schools

Again, we thank you for your bipartisan efforts reintroducing this bill to support our research enterprise, which is paramount to advancing scientific research and supporting the U.S. economy. If our organization can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Lauren Inouye, at Linouye@cgs.nche.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne T. Ortega".

Suzanne T. Ortega
President