



Better health through
laboratory medicine.

September 3, 2015

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
US Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin and Senator Collins,

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) endorses the “Next Generation Researchers Act,” which seeks to address the decline in young researchers obtaining National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding. If enacted, this bill would assist young scientists seeking NIH grants by strengthening mentoring programs and assisting researchers in obtaining renewal funding. The bill would also fund a National Academy of Sciences study to identify barriers to new researchers obtaining research grants and make recommendations to address them. AACC believes this bill represents a well-balanced approach for addressing a longstanding area of concern within the healthcare and biomedical research communities.

AACC is a global scientific and medical professional organization dedicated to clinical laboratory science and its application to healthcare. AACC brings together more than 50,000 clinical laboratory professionals, physicians, research scientists, and business leaders from around the world focused on clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, mass spectrometry, translational medicine, lab management, and other areas of progressing laboratory science. Since 1948, AACC has worked to advance the common interests of the field, providing programs that advance scientific collaboration, knowledge, expertise, and innovation.

AACC recognizes the need for greater federal involvement in identifying the causes for the decline in young scientists receiving NIH research grants as well as finding policy solutions to address these obstacles. 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, while during the same time period the percentage of research grants with a principal investigator under age 36 has declined from 18 to 3. AACC is pleased that the “Next Generation Researchers Act” takes an evidence-based approach to identifying and addressing the root causes of this problem, while providing greater assistance to young researchers in need of guidance.

We look forward to working with you on this most important issue. If you have any questions, please email Vince Stine, PhD, AACC Director of Government Affairs, at vstine@aacc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David D. Koch".

David D. Koch, PhD, DABCC
President, AACC