



**Human Factors
and Ergonomics
Society**

**Official Written Testimony in Support of
Fiscal Year 2020 Science and Research Funding**

Submitted to the House Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

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Submitted by

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On behalf of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES), we are pleased to provide this written testimony to the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies for the official record. **HFES urges the Subcommittee to provide \$460 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and \$346.3 million for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), including a \$2 million increase over the FY 2019 level for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs); the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) Program; and the Total Worker Health Program in fiscal year (FY) 2020.**

AHRQ funds research to protect and promote patient safety and care, while identifying and evaluating efficiencies to save lives and reduce costs. HFES requests \$460 million, which is

consistent with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation. This funding level will allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated after years of cuts and will help the agency avoid a funding cliff that will result in more than a 25 percent cut to its program level budget when the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Trust Fund is at risk of expiring at the end of FY 2019. HFES also urges the Subcommittee to continue to fund AHRQ as its own agency, rather than integrating it into the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as proposed in the President's FY 2020 budget request.

Additionally, HFES requests \$346.4 million for NIOSH, including a \$2 million increase over the FY 2019 level for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs); the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) Program; and the Total Worker Health Program. The FY 2020 President's budget request proposes reducing the NIOSH budget and eliminating many NIOSH programs, which would limit the ability of workers to avoid exposures that can result in injury or illnesses, push back improved working conditions, eliminate occupational safety and health educational services to U.S. businesses, and ultimately raise health care costs.

HFES and its members recognize and appreciate the challenging fiscal environment in which we as a nation currently find ourselves. However, we believe strongly that investment in scientific research serves as an important driver for innovation and the economy as well as for protecting and promoting the health, safety, and well-being of Americans. We thank the Subcommittee for its longtime recognition of the value of scientific and engineering research and its contribution to innovation and public health in the U.S.

The Value of Human Factors and Ergonomics Science

HFES is a multidisciplinary professional association with over 4,500 individual members worldwide, including psychologists and other scientists, engineers, and designers, all with a

common interest in designing safe and effective systems and equipment that maximize and adapt to human capabilities.

For over 50 years, the U.S. federal government has funded scientists and engineers to explore and better understand the relationship between humans, technology, and the environment. Originally stemming from urgent needs to improve the performance of humans using complex systems such as aircraft during World War II, the field of human factors and ergonomics (HF/E) works to develop safe, effective, and practical human use of technology. HF/E does this by developing scientific approaches for understanding this complex interface, also known as “human-systems integration.” Today, HF/E is applied to fields as diverse as transportation, architecture, environmental design, consumer products, electronics and computers, energy systems, medical devices, manufacturing, office automation, organizational design and management, aging, farming, health, sports and recreation, oil field operations, mining, forensics, and education.

With increasing reliance by federal agencies and the private sector on technology-aided decision-making, HF/E is vital to effectively achieving our national objectives. While a large proportion of HF/E research exists at the intersection of science and practice—that is, HF/E is often viewed more at the “applied” end of the science continuum—the field also contributes to advancing “fundamental” scientific understanding of the interface between human decision-making, engineering, design, technology, and the world around us. The reach of HF/E is profound, touching nearly all aspects of human life from the health care sector, to the ways we travel, to the hand-held devices we use every day.

Conclusion

HFES urges the Subcommittee to provide \$460 million for AHRQ and \$346.3 million for NIOSH, including a \$2 million increase for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs); the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) Program; and the Total Worker Health Program in fiscal year (FY) 2020. These investments fund important research studies, enabling an evidence base, methodology, and measurements for improving healthcare, safety, and public health for Americans.

On behalf of the HFES, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions about HFES or HF/E research. HFES truly appreciates the Subcommittee's long history of support for scientific research and innovation.