August XX, 2020

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson:

At this time of great challenges for our nation, we write to thank you for your leadership in confronting inequities in the U.S. scientific enterprise that have prevented full participation of racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in STEM. We therefore support your call for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to undertake a study to acknowledge and assess this structural problem, namely systemic racism in academia.

As we have seen in stark terms over the last six months, while the novel coronavirus is a threat to everyone living in the U.S., the burden has not been equally felt. There are disproportionately higher rates of illness and death in communities of color in the U.S. The reasons for this are many, but it illustrates with new urgency the need to foster a diverse and inclusive scientific workforce to tackle these and other challenges from a wider range of perspectives.

While efforts to increase diversity in the scientific workforce may have produced incremental change, we have yet to see large-scale results. Across disciplines, demographic representation throughout the ranks of academia still fails to reflect the diversity of our society. We are hopeful that a comprehensive study by the NASEM will yield the data and tools that the academic community needs to pursue evidence-based changes leading to more rapid progress.

A scientific enterprise that reflects the diversity of our nation will be more innovative and better equipped to address the challenges before us. Collectively, our organizations are working to change culture and improve diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within our staff, our members and our disciplines. The scientific community stands ready to work with you and your committee as you endeavor to address the systemic racism that exists within academia.

Sincerely,

Acoustical Society of America  
Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation  
American Anthropological Association
American Association for Anatomy
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Chemical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Human Genetics
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
American Sociological Association
Association for Molecular Pathology
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)
AWIS - Association for Women in Science
Biophysical Society
Council on Undergraduate Research
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Scientists
Geological Society of America
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