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# Science Legislation

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## Forum

This forum is arranged from material selected by the editorial staff from testimony given on 28 and 29 May before the Subcommittee on Public Health of the House of Representatives Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.

*Science* has been endeavoring to keep up to date with the current developments in the Congress related to science legislation. The equivalent of almost three regular issues has been devoted to this subject since 1 January.

Readers of *Science* were informed for the first time on 7 June that a bill proposing a National Science Foundation had been introduced into the House on 15 May and hearings before a subcommittee had been held on 28 and 29 May. Since this new bill, H.R. 6448, was based on the older Senate Magnuson Bill and not on the compromise Kilgore-Magnuson Bill, S. 1850, Watson Davis was caused to remark that the new bill seems to divide again those scientists who favor some kind of Federal support for research.

### Why H.R. 6448 Is the Better Bill

Homer W. Smith  
*New York University*

... Despite the preponderant testimony from scientists and those experienced in scientific affairs in favor of the Magnuson Bill, this bill remained in administrative disfavor. At the conclusion of the [November] hearings it was clear that the essential principles for the preservation of the freedom of science, so strongly urged by all of Dr. Bush's committees, were in danger of being completely submerged in favor of political control. There was strong opposition to scientists having anything more than a nominal voice in determining the policies of the Foundation. It was presumed that the top scientists of the country would give generously of their time to act on an advisory committee which had neither authority nor responsibility. It was clear, in short, that the philosophy of the Foundation was to be one appropriate to war mobilization and government direction, and not one appropriate to the peacetime development of science by experienced civilian scientists.

On 14 November a number of scientists met under the chairmanship of President Isaiah Bowman, of The Johns Hopkins University, to discuss the progress of this legislation. At that time it appeared that the essential principles for the preservation of the freedom of science and the protection of the National

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In the same issue Howard A. Meyerhoff pointed out that the introduction of the new bill was a definite threat to the establishment of a National Science Foundation during this session of Congress and implied that it might be necessary to go through the whole process of compromising the opposing factions all over again.

In order that our readers may be better informed with regard to the issues, the views of Dr. Homer Smith, speaking for the Committee Supporting the Bush report, and the Secretary of Commerce, Henry A. Wallace, are presented here, together with a statement from Dr. Meyerhoff outlining his position as executive secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The statements of Dr. Smith and Secretary Wallace are somewhat abbreviated. Dr. Meyerhoff's statement was written expressly for *Science*.

### Why S. 1850 Is the Better Bill

Henry A. Wallace  
*Secretary of Commerce*

... In my opinion S. 1850 combines the best features of S. 1285 and S. 1297 as well as a number of additional desirable provisions which grow out of the expert testimony presented at the hearings. S. 1850 is in accordance with the President's recommendations on science legislation; H.R. 6448 is in conflict with those recommendations on several important points.

I believe that the following provisions of H.R. 6448 are particularly undesirable:

(1) The bill provides that the powers and duties of the National Science Foundation shall be exercised by a part-time administrative board of nine members appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. This is substantially the same administrative arrangement as in the original Magnuson Bill in the Senate, S. 1285. A slight compromise has been made, however, by providing that the Director of the Foundation shall be appointed by the President from nomination by the Board, in place of the original provision for a Director appointed by the Board. Since all powers of the Foundation rest in the Board, this compromise is more apparent than real. As I stated in my testimony on the Senate Bills, I am strongly opposed in principle to turning over public functions and responsibilities, and especially the power to allocate public funds, to a part-time board of private citizens. I am in complete agreement with the President's position

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