the success rate is said to be better in the United States.

The cable was signed by 55 scientists from 13 countries. Among those volunteering as good-faith witnesses are six U.S. Nobel laureates: Christian B. Anfinsen, Gerard Debreu, Paul J. Flory, Arthur Kornberg, Arno A. Penzias, and Herbert A. Simon.

A parallel initiative was taken recently under the auspices of the Committee of Concerned Scientists, a U.S. human rights organization. Thirty-three U.S. Nobel laureates signed a cable to the United Nations subcommittee on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities asking that it designate one or more of their number to act as authorized U.N. observers to ascertain the whereabouts of Sakharov. The subcommittee, which is part of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, is not noted for taking direct action in human rights cases but is regarded as a useful international forum on the issue.

—JOHN WALSH

House and Senate Prepare for Battle on Ag Research

The long-running battle over the Department of Agriculture's research programs will enter a critical phase when Congress reconvenes in early September. Just before leaving for the August recess, the Senate passed a version of the 1985 agriculture appropriations bill that would undo many cuts made by the House, particularly in basic research and biotechnology. The differences between the two versions will now have to be reconciled by a conference committee. In previous years, the House has generally prevailed.

In particular, the Senate bill restores the Administration's budget request of $50 million for USDA's competitive grants program. The House reduced that request by $17.5 million, added in several earmarked projects that had been classified as applied research in previous budgets, and slashed to $10 million (from $28.5 million) the Administration's recommended biotechnology initiative (*Science*, 13 July, p. 151).

The Senate Appropriations Committee noted in its report accompanying the bill that the "biotechnology program should be open to all areas of agricultural science. . . ." This would negate provisions in the House bill earmarking funds for specific areas of research, and could be a major point of contention when the bills are dealt with in conference.

In addition, if the Senate gets its way, the overall appropriation for USDA's Cooperative State Research Service program will be substantial, increasing it to $291 million, which is about $44 million more than the 1984 appropriation, $40 million more than the House bill calls for, and $24 million above the Administration's request for 1985.

The Senate also added $21.6 million for the construction of Agriculture Research Service facilities. Most of this money, if approved, will go to North Dakota State University for a metabolism and radiation research laboratory and to build a National Soil Tilth Center in Ames, Iowa.

In a separate action, the Senate Appropriations Committee has called for a $10-million initiative in forestry research, half of which would involve biotechnology. Although the program appears as part of the Department of Interior appropriations bill, the program would be managed by USDA. The bill has not yet been considered on the floor of the Senate. The new program does not appear in the House version of the bill, which has been approved.—JEFFREY L. FOX

Cancer Board Appointees Strong in Science

What many researchers have seen as a deplorable lack of scientific expertise among presidential appointees to the National Cancer Advisory Board in the past 4 years has been reversed by the most recent round of new appointments by the Reagan White House. Under both Presidents Carter and Reagan an apparent tendency to select NCAB nominees on the basis of political rather than scientific credentials skewed the board membership away from research M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s, so much so that in a letter to *Science* earlier this year (20 January, p. 236), outgoing board members were able to write that "No member continuing beyond 1984 will have a Ph.D., and very few will have had experience as a principal investigator [on an NIH grant]."

The gist of the complaint was that too many of the 12 "scientific" positions on the board (an additional six are for laypersons) were going to physicians in private practice who lacked any real experience in clinical or basic cancer research.

Protests lodged on Capitol Hill and with the Administration evidently have been taken seriously by the White House appointments office. Most noteworthy is the fact that David Korn, M.D., chairman of pathology at Stanford, was recently named chairman of the NCAB, replacing former Republican congressman Tim Lee Carter, also an M.D., who served as board chairman for the past 2 years. In designating Korn as chairman, the White House broke with a long tradition of reappointing the chairman every 2 years until he completed his 6-year term on the board.

Korn trained at the National Institutes of Health after graduating from Harvard Medical School, has been on NIH study sections, and served for several years on the board of scientific counselors that reviews intramural research at the National Cancer Institute. The appointment has met with uniform enthusiasm and surprise by scientists contacted by *Science*.

Other new Reagan appointees are:

Roswell K. Boutwell, an oncologist at the McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Helene G. Brown, director of community applications at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of California at Los Angeles.

Gertrude B. Elion, scientist emeritus at the Wellcome Research Labs, Research Triangle Park, and professor of pharmacology at Duke.

Louise Connally Strong, a geneticist and pediatrician at the M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute in Houston.

Korn, who believes that for the long run the best investment of public funds is in basic science, says that it is important now that the NCAB not become polarized. "It is terribly important," he says, "that the board behave in a statesman-like way" and seek balance in its review of basic and more therapy-oriented NCI programs.—BARBARA J. CULLITON