2229). As a workshop participant, I dispute Malakoff's characterization of H.R. 2148, the bill introduced by Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) to reauthorize the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). For an event that could have had characteristics of a religious revival—half of its attendees had been either employees, contractors, or advisors of OTA—the workshop was pragmatic and analytical.

Framed by speeches from U.S. Representatives Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), Amo Houghton (R-NY), and Holt, and letters from U.S. Senators Ted Stevens (R-AK) and John Rockefeller (D-WV) lamenting Congress's need of better technical advice, the workshop established a dialectic between the advocacy by "policy wonks" of a new mechanism for advice and the perception that Congress only needs what it says it needs. Although there was no "consensus on what might convince Congress to change its mind," there was consensus on four points of institutional design for any advisory mechanism. It would need to be (i) robustly bipartisan and bicameral, (ii) a functional part of Congress (like a support agency or the staff of a joint committee), (iii) staffed with a significant number of in-house people, but with the flexibility to use contractors, and (iv) able to provide a variety of information services to a variety of congressional clients (*1*).

That this consensus sounds like a modified version of the old OTA is neither accident nor bias; it is the opinion of the participants based on their experience and scholarship. Holt's bill, certainly not "dead on arrival" with more than three dozen bipartisan cosponsors, signals that Congress might be beginning to resolve the conflict that eliminated OTA and to deliberate on a plan to improve its deliberations.

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References and Notes
1. M. G. Morgan, "Improving science and technology advice for the U. S. Congress: briefing notes," in preparation.

Increase Competition to Stabilize Drug Prices

DONALD KENNEDY'S CONDEMNATION OF Senator Ron Wyden's (D-OR) proposal to punish research universities by taxing successful technology transfer that leads to profitable pharmaceuticals is, for the most part, well reasoned (Editorial, "Drug prices: real problem, wrong solution," 8 Jun., p. 1797). As Kennedy observes, royalty revenue streams that flow to universities from commercial licenses contribute negligibly to a drug's eventual price, and the incentive of royalties spurs technology transfer and creates a positive feedback loop that benefits all stakeholders.

More fundamentally, however, Wyden's proposal seems an attempt to tax our way out of a market failure, one marked by an insurance-based reimbursement system, stultifying regulation, and a shrinking number of research-based drug companies. Taxation is a solution that cannot work. But neither can Kennedy's suggestion that universities "think again about whether it's wise to press for continued royalty payments on real 'blockbuster' drugs, especially those serving the most vulnerable populations."

It would be better to address drug pricing by increasing the competition among drug manufacturers so that they are forced to compete on price. One way would be to reduce the huge regulatory costs and time required to bring drugs to market. Reducing the burden of government regulation by opening up the drug review process to third-party, extragovernmental review would streamline and improve the quality

of drug evaluation. The result would be earlier access by patients to greater numbers of less costly drugs and greater robustness and productivity in the pharmaceutical industry.

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National Astronomical Observatories in China

IN HER NEWS FOCUS ARTICLE "IN CHINA, publish or perish is becoming the new reality" (23 Feb., p. 1477), Ding Yimin says that I, as director of the Beijing Astronomical Observatory (now the National Astronomical Observatories), "decided that no one over the age of 50 could be chosen for KIP [the Knowledge Innovation Program]." However, this is not the case. Of the 91 staff members at the observatory who were chosen for KIP, four are over the age of 60, and a further 20 are over the age of 50.

Regarding publishing incentives, we do indeed have a limited bonus scheme here to encourage staff to publish in journals listed in the *Science Citation Index* (*SCI*). Average earnings from bonuses amount to 10 to 15% of an individual's total income. However, this should not be confused with recruitment or funding policies. At this observatory, basic research is conducted side by side with technological development and the making of astronomical observations. We therefore recognize that research papers are just one, albeit very important, aspect of an observatory's output. Decisions about whom to support under KIP are made by a selection committee that takes publications as well as other contributions into account. There is certainly no policy here to support only those researchers who have published a paper in a *SCI*-listed journal or one such paper per year. In fact, 60% of our staff members receiving KIP support have not published a paper in such journals in the last 2 years.

I also note that my name was misspelled throughout the article.

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

NEWS OF THE WEEK: "Arson strikes research labs and tree farm in Pacific Northwest" by Robert F. Service (1 Jun., p. 1622). For the 20 July entry in the table, the location of the attack on research facilities was the U.S. Forest Service's Forestry Sciences Laboratory, not its biotechnology lab, in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. And the trees destroyed were not genetically engineered, as indicated in the table, but a collection of natural poplars and pines that Don Riemenschneider of the U.S. Forest Service had been working on for nearly 20 years in an effort to test whether disease resistance could be obtained through conventional breeding rather than by genetic engineering.

REPORTS: "Pot1, the putative telomere end-binding protein in fission yeast and humans" by P. Baumann and T. R. Cech (11 May, p. 1171). The accession number for the human *POT1* (protection of telomeres) gene is FLJ11073 instead of FLJ11037, which is listed as highly similar to an apoptosis-specific protein and is unrelated to *POT1*.

RESEARCH ARTICLES: "Direct detection of galactic halo dark matter" by B. R. Oppenheimer *et al.* (27 Apr., p. 698). In note 19, the name of coauthor Samir Salim was not included. The reference should have read "19. C. Flynn, J. Sommer-Larsen, B. Fuchs, D. S. Graff, S. Salim, *Mon. Not. R. Astron. Soc.* **322**, 553 (2001)."