Welcome to the August 13th CPI meeting with Special Guest – Congressman Bill Flores

- **Update from the Office of Congressman Bill Flores** - Congressman Flores
- **Questions submitted from the Texas A&M research community** – CPI Chair
- **Open forum Q&A with CPI members** – Moderated by CPI Chair
- **Recognition of Outgoing and Incoming CPI members** – CPI Chair
Update from the Office of Congressman Bill Flores
According to the May 2014 newsletter of the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB), the Congressman voted against an amendment that, had it passed, would have made room in the budget for annual increases for the NIH of between $2 billion and $3 billion until 2024.

The article stated that Congressman Flores led the opposition to the amendment and that NIH funds “questionable” research projects and that NIH would have sufficient additional funds if it put “an end to wasteful spending and the elimination of duplicate research funding”.

Cont.-
Questions:
Can the Congressman provide some additional background about this amendment and why he voted against it?

Can the Congressman cite specific examples of NIH research he perceives as “questionable” as the article describes?

What are some examples of duplicate NIH research funding and what was the process by which it was determined this funding was wasteful?

What are some ways in which the Congressman envisions increasing NIH funding, which is a critical research funding source for many throughout the Texas A&M research community?
Immigration Reform for High-Skilled Workers (Individuals that hold Ph.D. degrees from American Universities)

Will the U.S. Congress take a look at the current immigration system and put in place common sense policies that reward innovation through retention of U.S. educated scientists and researchers?
How could the impact of the DATA Act regulation be mitigated (because this is clearly something that falls in the cost of "regulation", and it is, for once, not the government that imposed it by Congress)?

One of the options would be to lean on Treasury, who has been charged with developing the coding system under which expenses have to be billed. If this coding system contains 500 categories, then clearly there will have to be a lot of time and effort expended putting every expense into the appropriate category.

On the other hand, if these codes only distinguish between salary/travel/supplies, then the existing accounting systems will be able to do the coding automatically because grant accounts are already split into these categories, and very little additional effort will be necessary.

What is the Congressman’s opinion on all of this?
Texas A&M researchers generate more than $820 million dollars in research expenditures each year, largely by successfully competing for grants given by the federal government. This federal money is critical to the performance of ground breaking research, facilitating the next generation of scientific discoveries, training of undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and frankly- heavily and directly impacts employment in the Brazos valley. This is not abstract- I've trained more than 20 undergraduates, 5 graduates, 4 professional students (MD or DVM), and employed up to 12 people in my lab on federal funding at any given time- not to mention other metrics like papers published etc.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget has not kept pace with inflation and has stayed roughly level at around $30 billion/year for more than 8 years. This has had, and continues to have a devastating effect on biomedical research at TAMU and nationwide, and on the ability of researchers here at TAMU to perform all those functions that I listed above. Cont.-
What do you see as your role in promoting federal investment in research? How specifically have you promoted federal investment in research, and how do you plan to do so in the future? Would he be open to working with the CPI (*meeting with small groups of researchers, or visiting labs*) to see first-hand how we utilize federal funds for research? Are other agencies facing the same thing as NIH?

Similarly, what are the prospects for other major sources of research funding (DOE, NOAA, NSF, DOD, etc.)?
What is the Congressman’s position on imposing new requirements on National Science Foundation (NSF) funding and to its possible politicization?
Does the Congressman favor NSF funding to support social sciences in general and political science specifically?
Does the Congressman favor the concept of peer review and, if not, what would he propose?
With regards to the National Science Board’s March 2014 Report, Reducing Investigators’ Administrative Workload for Federally Funded Research, can the Congressman address the need to streamline federal regulations to reduce unnecessary burden and cost on universities too?
Open forum Q&A with CPI members — Moderated by CPI Chair
Recognition of Incoming and Outgoing CPI members— CPI Chair (NOTE – I’ll have pictures of each and you can read through the list of outgoing/incoming. Shouldn’t take too long.)
Other business
Acknowledgements

Thank you for attending today’s meeting.

Copies of today’s presentation materials are be available at [http://cpi.tamu.edu/meetings](http://cpi.tamu.edu/meetings)

The next CPI meeting will be held in closed session with only elected CPI members on September 10th.

The next open CPI meeting with guest members will be on October 8th.

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