



College of Arts & Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS &  
COGNITIVE SCIENCE

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Senators Thomas Carper and Christopher Coons; Representative John Carney

Dear Sirs:

I am a doctoral student in Linguistics and Cognitive Science at the University of Delaware. As Vice-President of the Linguistics Association of Delaware, which represents the concerns of graduate students, I felt compelled to write to you to express concerns about how the recent budget crisis threatens students in Delaware.

We were all dismayed to learn that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice & Science (CJS) is considering changing the 2012 appropriation to eliminate the Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate at the National Science Foundation (NSF), which includes the Linguistics Program.

First, such a change would be a major blow to human science research in America. Amid the recent focus on STEM fields in education and research, the human and cognitive sciences, which are already underfunded compared to other fields, should not be neglected, as they bear directly on human behavior and quality of life. Furthermore, the economic and social sciences can provide valuable data relevant to many currently important policy issues, from healthcare to education to employment, at a time when the debate surrounding these issues has become dominated by ideology, rather than reason.

It has become fashionable in some political circles to belittle the importance of basic research, but such research provides the knowledge necessary for developing new technologies. One such example is the work of University of Delaware Linguistics Professor Jeffrey Heinz, whose collaborative robotics project with Mechanical Engineering Professor Herbert Tanner was recently featured by NSF.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, this research relies heavily on insights from theoretical linguistics. Another example is our undergraduate program in Speech/Language Pathology, which starts students on the path to become clinicians helping those with communication disorders, learning disabilities, and cognitive impairments, improving their educational outcomes and quality of life. As Delaware's congressional delegation has some background the sciences (Mr. Carney in economics, Mr. Coons in chemistry), I hope you will recognize the value in continuing to support basic research in all sciences.

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<sup>1</sup>[www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/science\\_nation/index.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/science_nation/index.jsp)

From a local perspective, the elimination of these programs will have major consequences for students and faculty across the University of Delaware, a major intellectual, cultural, and economic center in the First State. I and my colleagues in Linguistics and Cognitive Science have devoted years of our lives to studying a subject we love, and which we have been led to believe the federal government considered worthy of support. Several students have been awarded fellowships by NSF, but if those funds are not appropriated, these students will find themselves without support and unable to complete their dissertation research. Faculty research funded by NSF is likely to go unfinished, and graduate students who rely on such funds to support themselves and their families may not finish their degrees.

I urge you to oppose efforts to weaken or eliminate funding for the human sciences, which in the long run will only hurt our nation's status in the global economy, and I hope you will encourage your Democratic and Republican colleagues in the House and Senate to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evan D. Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Evan D. Bradley  
University of Delaware