

Provision seeks to help colleges, high schools buy nanotechnology equipment through grants

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), John Kerry (D-MA), Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Mark Pryor (D-AR) have successfully added a provision to U.S. competitiveness legislation to authorize the use of National Science Foundation grant funds to acquire nanotechnology equipment and software designed for teaching students about nanotechnology in the classroom.

“I have seen the nanotechnology equipment that folks will be able to use these funds to purchase, and it will help attract talented young people to nanotechnology in Oregon and across the nation,” said Wyden, Co-Chairman of the congressional Nanotechnology Caucus.

“We have seen first hand in Massachusetts how much promise the field of nanotechnology holds,” Kerry said. “This is a victory for innovation - good for students and good for science. I’m thrilled with this achievement and I thank Senator Wyden for his leadership.”

“Putting the most up to date learning tools in classrooms helps students gain an edge that will help them compete after graduation in a global economy,” Smith said. “Ultimately, investing in high-tech education will bolster Oregon’s economy and will lead to technology advances not even thought of today.”

“If we are to harness the extraordinary potential of nanotechnology, we must make it an educational priority,” Pryor said. “This legislation will foster partnerships between American businesses and schools so that we can continue to stay competitive in the global economy. From medical technology to heavy machinery, I’ve seen first-hand how nanotechnology is advancing in my home state of Arkansas and I am proud to support this initiative.”

The language in the provision was added to an amendment offered by U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) to establish a laboratory science pilot program at the National Science Foundation and included in the America COMPETES Act, which the U.S. Senate approved yesterday.

The senators said that with the inclusion of the language, partnerships between low-income school districts, colleges and universities and businesses will be able to secure funds to purchase classroom versions of scanning electron microscopes and other tools that are fundamental to the study of nanotechnology.

Wyden also noted that the 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act will come up for reauthorization next year. As one of authors of the Act, he said reauthorizing the legislation will help further promote American competitiveness in the field of nanotechnology.

Nanotechnology allows the creation of new products and processes through the manipulation of individual atoms. Nanotechnology is expected to have a significant impact on the future of many fields, including information technology, homeland security, medicine, and energy production and distribution. Indeed, estimates of the potential annual global market for products that apply nanotechnology exceed \$2 trillion by 2014, and projections indicate that two million workers are likely to be needed to support nanotechnology industries worldwide

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