

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

The Honorable Carl Heastie
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

The Honorable Andrea Stewart Cousins
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie, and Leader Stewart-Cousins:

As you proceed with the FY 2021/22 budget process, we strongly urge you to reject the proposal to cut funding and eliminate the NYSTEM program. We fully understand that this is an extraordinary year and that the budget is tight, but this program has been a tremendous scientific and economic development success and it would be a real loss to the State if the program was eliminated.

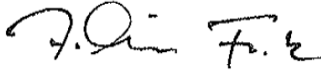
We are all previous winners of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry or Physiology or Medicine and have devoted our careers and lives to science. None of us currently receive any funding from NYSTEM, so we have no personal stake in the outcome of this issue, but we believe that stem cell research holds tremendous promise for better understanding human biology and developing prevention strategies, treatments, and perhaps even cures for many debilitating diseases such as Parkinson's, diabetes, Alzheimer's, macular degeneration, cancer and cardiovascular disorders including stroke and sudden death.

In 2007, when New York created NYSTEM and began funding cutting edge stem research, the scientific community was thrilled because they realized that this program would help move science forward and solidify the state as a leader in this exciting research field. There is no doubt the program has been a huge success, funding exciting research and improving the State's research infrastructure.

Our fear is that were the state to significantly decrease, or even worse, eliminate funding for NYSTEM, all the momentum the program has fostered would be lost. Worse yet, researchers, especially young researchers, would see this as a sign that they cannot count on New York to maintain its commitment to support stem cell research or other areas of science. They might look elsewhere to conduct their work, for example California, which just approved an additional \$5.5 billion for stem cell research, taking with them not only their intellectual firepower, but their grant funding and the jobs they created as well.

This is not something that we want to see happen. Please maintain the NYSTEM program. Thank you.

With many thanks,



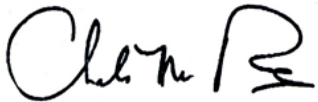
Joachim Frank, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics
Columbia University
Nobel Prize 2017, Chemistry



Roald Hoffmann, Ph.D.
Frank H.T. Rhodes Professor of Humane Letters
Cornell University
Nobel Prize 1981, Chemistry



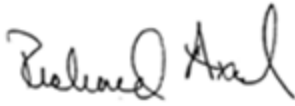
Martin Chalfie, Ph.D.
University Professor
Columbia University
Nobel Prize 2008, Chemistry



Charles Moen Rice, Ph.D.
Maurice R. and Corinne P. Greenberg Professor
Rockefeller University
Nobel Prize 2020, Physiology or Medicine



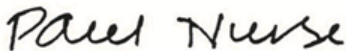
Eric Kandel, M.D.
University Professor and Kavli Professor of Brain Science
Columbia University
Nobel Prize 2000, Physiology or Medicine



Richard Axel, M.D.
University Professor and HHMI Investigator
Columbia University
Nobel Prize 2004, Physiology or Medicine



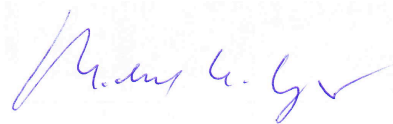
Roderick MacKinnon, M.D.
John D. Rockefeller Jr. Professor, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Principal Investigator
Rockefeller University/Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Nobel Prize 2003, Chemistry



Sir Paul Nurse FRS
Rockefeller University Emeritus President
Nobel Prize 2001, Physiology or Medicine



Torsten N. Wiesel, M.D., F.R.S.
President Emeritus
Rockefeller University
Nobel Prize 1981, Physiology or Medicine
National Medal of Science, 2005



Michael W. Young, Ph.D.
Richard and Jeanne Fisher Professor
Rockefeller University
Nobel Prize 2017, Physiology or Medicine

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