



1 June 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

IEEE-USA members strongly endorse the nomination of Dr. Sethuraman “Panch” Panchanathan for Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and we urge you to confirm him to that position quickly. Now is not the time for the United States to be without a leader of our premier research-funding organization.

Dr. Panchanathan’s qualifications as a researcher and as an administrator are impeccable. As Executive Vice President of Arizona State University Knowledge Enterprise Development and Chief Innovation Officer at Arizona State University and a Fellow of IEEE, Dr. Panchanathan led advances in research, forged strategic partnership and managed global and economic development programs. As a computer scientist and member of the National Science Board, he has focused on policies that advanced innovative research in big data, quantum information systems, artificial intelligence and many other disciplines. As Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE Multimedia Magazine and many other journals, Dr. Panchanathan showed that he enjoys the respect of the full engineering and scientific community, and that he understands the broader research ecosystem beyond his personal work.

Dr. Panchanathan has the foundation necessary to lead the next generation research at the National Science Foundation and build on the agency’s collaborations with private and federal research institutions.

Throughout its history, the National Science Foundation has supported research in every state and congressional district that lead to discoveries benefitting people around the globe. The agency’s collaborations with the National Institute for Standards and Technology, Departments of Defense and Energy, and NASA have led to U.S. being at the forefront of research in cybersecurity, electric grid, defense applications and rocketry systems. Dr. Panchanathan’s international background and commitment to the research enterprise here in the United States will help strengthen those interagency partnerships.

IEEE-USA, representing nearly 180,000 individual engineers, researchers and other technology professionals across the United States, strongly urges you to confirm his appointment as director of the National Science Foundation quickly, so that the NSF can function at peak efficiency in these difficult times.

Jim Conrad
President, IEEE-USA