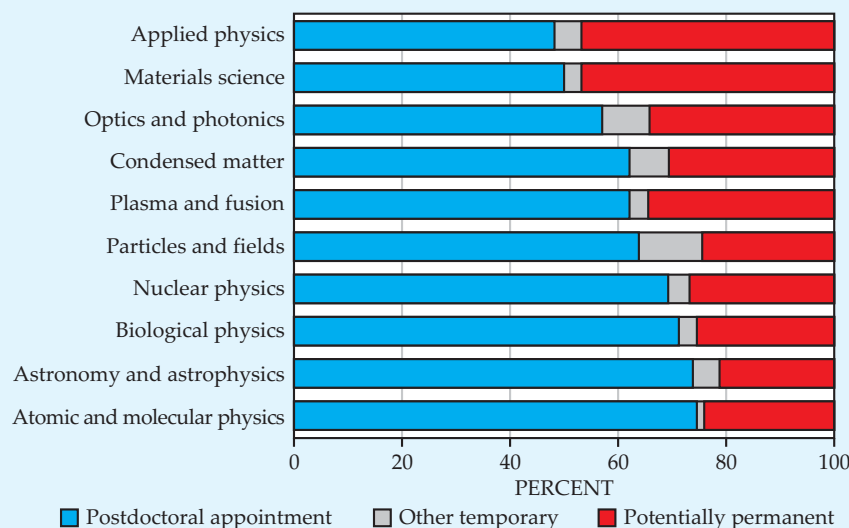


## Jobs for physics doctorates

Some 61% of freshly minted US physics and astronomy PhDs from the classes of 2009 and 2010 took postdocs, and 30% of them found potentially permanent jobs. That's up—and down, respectively—from 56% and 33% from the classes of 2007 and 2008, changes due at least in part to the economic slump. Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of people in applied fields found potentially permanent work (red bars) than did those in fundamental research, who took postdocs in greater numbers (blue bars). These and related data are discussed in *Physics Doctorates One Year Later*, a recent report by the Statistical Research Center of the American Institute of Physics; see <http://aip.org/statistics/trends/emptrends.html>.

Toni Feder

### Initial employment of physics and astronomy PhDs by subfield of dissertation, classes of 2009 and 2010 combined



cates the decision-making process." Under the proposed reorganization, the satellites would become NOAA's responsibility once they are in orbit and their systems checked out, the committee report said.

Kathryn Sullivan, NOAA deputy administrator, told members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on 27 June that the White House is carefully considering whether to go along with the Senate bill's instructions. A House-passed version of the appropriations bill has no comparable provision. Assuming the full Senate approves the bill, the two versions will be reconciled by a House-Senate conference committee this autumn or later.

Mikulski's proposal would be the latest shakeup in the nearly two-decade-old multiagency struggle to develop and deploy new polar-orbiting satellites. The troubles date to 1994, when as an economizing step that was supposed to save \$1.3 billion, President Bill Clinton ordered the Department of Defense and NOAA to combine what

were then separate polar-orbiting satellite programs. The combined program was estimated to cost \$6.5 billion over 24 years and consist of six satellites, the first due for launch in 2008. But after billions of dollars were spent with no satellites to show, and amid interagency squabbles over the number and types of sensors to carry aboard, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy separated the military and civilian programs again in 2010 (see PHYSICS TODAY, November 2011, page 28).

### Downsized program

Representative Paul Broun (R-GA), who chaired a 27 June hearing on the status of the civilian program known as the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS), complained that its cost had climbed by \$1 billion just since the previous hearing on the program last fall, and the schedule had slipped another three months. The JPSS now consists of just two operational satellites, the first one to be launched in March 2017. A third satellite, a precursor known as

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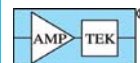
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