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We live in the most advanced scientific and technological society in history. New discoveries have led to improvements and benefits in our daily lives, but also to new societal problems. It is through chemistry that we can make major contributions to improve the quality of life in America and to advance the human condition around the globe. Chemistry is the key to eradicating disease and reducing poverty. Chemical research and technology can provide clean water and nutritious food, meet energy demands, and help lead to sustainable development everywhere.

Chemistry brings a wide range of goods and functions to everyone and thus is vital to our democracy. Science literacy is necessary for the democratic process to work. By science literacy I mean an appreciation of science, an understanding of the benefits of technology and the potential rewards and risks associated with advances in both, as well as a recognition of what science is capable of achieving and what it cannot accomplish. Science literacy enlightens and enables people to make informed choices; to be skeptical; to reject shams, quackery, and unproven conjecture; and to avoid being bamboozled into making foolish decisions where matters of science and technology are concerned. Science literacy is for everyone--chemists, artists, humanists, all professionals, the general public, youth and adults alike. The level of science literacy in any society is a measure of what it values and its resolve to put these values into practice.

Science and technology are the engines that drive our economy. A top priority for the nation is to support research and development in modern science, encourage creativity and innovation, and foster collaboration in order to ensure a healthy economy. Explorations for alternative, renewable, and sustainable sources of energy to meet the demands of modern society should be supported by business and government.

As president-elect of the American Chemical Society, I believe there are several key areas that we must focus on in order to advance the role of chemistry in society. We must help the public understand the science of climate change, and promote green chemistry and sustainable development. We need to focus on employment and workforce needs, and enhance the quality and supply of teachers. It is also important to improve scientific communications within and among various cultures, and foster international collaboration in research and education.