

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2026

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Michael Kratsios
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Director Vought and Director Kratsios:

We write regarding deeply troubling reports that the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other federal science agencies have deliberately ignored congressional directives and slowed, withheld, and redirected congressionally appropriated funding at the command of the White House. Because Congress recognizes the important role U.S. institutions of higher education play in our nation's dominance in research and innovation, which has long underpinned our global technological and economic leadership, the significant disruptions in the allocation of appropriated federal research grants are especially alarming. We request your urgent answers to pressing congressional oversight questions.

Recent reporting and documentation from federal agencies suggest that the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) appear to be orchestrating the withholding of federal research funding. On June 22, 2026, *Science* reported that NSF has reduced Fiscal Year 2026 funding for basic research programs across its directorates by an average of 20 to 30 percent, according to an internal memo from the agency that the publication received. The report further asserts that NSF program managers have been discouraged from recommending research proposals for grant funding and from communicating these "highly confidential" developments to principal investigators.¹ Subsequently, on July 24, 2026, *Nature* reported that the NSF has withheld \$300 million in congressional appropriated funding from its Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate and Computer and Information Science and Engineering Directorate, rescinding 150 grant proposals that have already passed peer review.² Similar disruptions in research grants have occurred at NIH, where the agency's rate for awarding new grants is 22 percent below the rate of past years, with substantial delays reported in funding decisions and the release of awarded funds.

These developments coincide with a broader shift in the Trump administration's approach to federal research funding, empowering its political appointees to redirect resources away from institutions of higher education that play a critical role in American innovation. On July 21, 2026, OSTP published a comprehensive report entitled *Science: A New Golden Age*, in which it outlines the administration's plan to overhaul the federal government's investment in scientific research and technology development. In the report, OSTP called for the federal government to "fundamentally change how research dollars are allocated, distributed, and assessed," with the

¹ <https://www.science.org/content/article/exclusive-nsf-slashes-research-programs-support-new-tech-initiative-insiders-say>

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-02135-x>

goal of shifting federal investments away from universities and other “legacy institutions.” The office further argued that research entities supported with federal grant dollars should avoid organizing themselves around “the academic silos of the last century, dismissing the central role that institutions of higher education play in advancing and commercializing scientific discovery.”³ These statements are particularly concerning in light of OMB’s proposed Uniform Grant Regulations, which would empower political appointees with unprecedented discretion to cancel research awards⁴ and subject \$1 trillion in federal grant funding to enormous uncertainty and politicization.

One of the clearest examples of how this proposed shift could impact university-based research is NSF’s new X-Labs initiative. X-Labs reportedly aims to fund projects that translate NSF-funded research into commercial products and industries, and according to NSF, the initiative is focused on awarding entities that can devote themselves full-time to a project while remaining “institutionally independent.”⁵ These requirements effectively eliminate scores of academic researchers at colleges and universities across the country from qualifying given the organizational structure of university-based research labs and the nature of academic research, which often requires principal investigators to meet teaching and other obligations in addition to their research work. These barriers are likely to unfairly favor venture-backed start-ups and other private companies that have the means to establish separate entities exclusively for pursuing X-Labs funding. This has already discouraged some academic researchers from considering X-Labs, even after NSF revised its initial solicitation for the program to address concerns raised by the higher education community.⁶

Universities are critical to the advancement of research that drives innovation and develops the next generation of scientific talent. Abruptly shifting resources away from established research programs undermines the stability of the nation’s innovation ecosystem and is already having negative repercussions on university campuses. Delays and uncertainty in NSF and NIH research funding are forcing schools to reduce critical Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics facilities, programs, and experts, pause the hiring of new postdoctoral and graduate students, and re-evaluate long-standing technology transfer partnerships with industry. These disruptions not only threaten the United States’s ability to recruit, train, and retain the next generation of innovators, but also research that serves as the foundation for future discoveries. Institutions of higher education conduct half of all U.S. basic research,⁷ much of which is considered too high-risk for the private sector to undertake but nevertheless has led to transformative technologies ranging from the internet and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to CRISPR gene editing and life-saving medical therapies. Universities play a critical role in bringing these discoveries to market, generating thousands of active technology patents and start-up companies that fuel our nation’s economic growth and global competitiveness.

We urge this administration to immediately provide greater clarity regarding these funding directives and ensure that any new research initiatives are implemented in a manner consistent

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Science-A-New-Golden-Age.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/29/2026-10817/regulation-for-federal-financial-assistance>

⁵ <https://sam.gov/workspace/contract/opp/dc94a6e5b9c14bb1ade1d3ac9845122c/view>

⁶ <https://www.science.org/content/article/nsf-makes-billion-dollar-gamble-research-economic-payoff>

⁷ <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf26313/table/7>

with its statutory mission and congressional intent. We also request a briefing from your offices as well as written answers to the following:

1. Has OSTP or OMB advised, directed, or otherwise consulted with NSF, NIH, or any other federal science agency regarding reductions, reprogramming, or other changes to Fiscal Year 2026 research funding? If so, please describe the nature of those communications, identify the agencies involved, and provide any recommendations or directives issued by OSTP or OMB.
2. Please identify all Fiscal Year 2026 funding for NSF, NIH, and other federal science agencies that have been withheld, reprogrammed, or recommended for reduction following guidance or recommendations from OSTP or OMB. For each action, provide the affected account or program, the amount of funding, the date of the action, the stated rationale, and the intended use of any redirected or reprogrammed funds.
3. What statutory authority does OMB intend to rely upon to implement the recommendations outlined in OSTP's report, *Science: A New Golden Age*, particularly those calling for the federal government to "fundamentally change how research dollars are allocated, distributed, and assessed" and prioritize funding for individual scientists and non-traditional research organizations over "legacy institutions"? What changes to existing federal grantmaking procedures or priorities are being considered, planned, or have been implemented?
4. How do OSTP's recommendations regarding changes to federal research funding align with congressional directives for fiscal year 2026 appropriations, including language directing NSF to equitably disburse funding across its basic research directorates and prohibiting any directorate from receiving "more than 5 percent reduction [in funding] relative to the fiscal year 2025 enacted level"?⁸

We look forward to your response no later than **October 1st, 2026**.

Sincerely,



Dave Min
Member of Congress

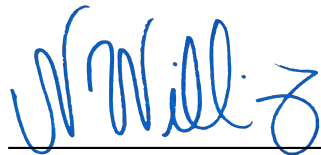
⁸ https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20260105/CJ%20EW%20Int%20Minibus%20-%20JES%20-%20Division%20A%20-%20CJS%20-%20201-7-2026.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com



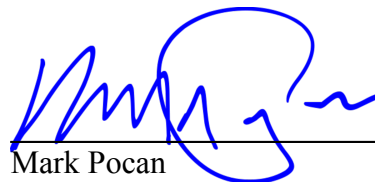
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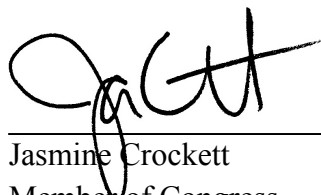
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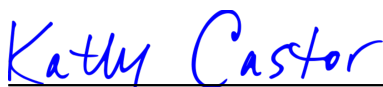
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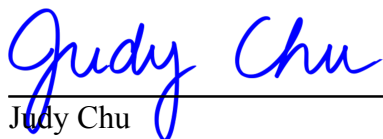
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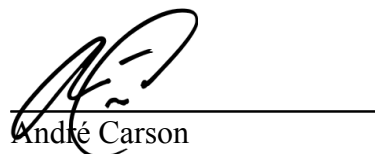
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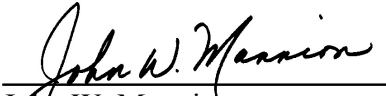
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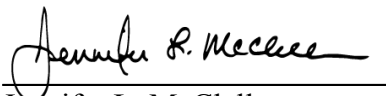
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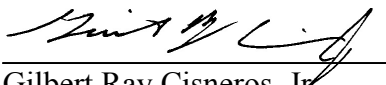
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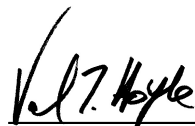
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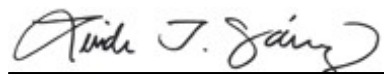
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