

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to express our deep concern regarding recent actions taken by your Administration that irreparably harm the National Science Foundation (NSF) and, by extension, the broader American scientific enterprise. As Members of Congress committed to maintaining the United States' leadership in science and technology, we are troubled by reports of halted funding and shifts away from the NSF's longstanding merit-based review process.

According to a recent article in *Nature*¹, NSF staff were instructed on April 30 to "stop awarding all funding actions until further notice." This directive not only halts new research grants but also suspends the disbursement of funds for existing projects, including those with previously approved annual installments. This means that money appropriated by Congress and already invested in ongoing research projects, which are now halted, has been wasted. Furthermore, the NSF has introduced a policy requiring staff to screen grant proposals for alignment with unspecified "agency priorities," with non-conforming proposals to be returned to applicants.

The NSF has, for decades, been a cornerstone of American innovation, funding groundbreaking research that has led to advancements in medical imaging, artificial intelligence, geographic information systems, and numerous other fields. Central to the NSF's success has been its commitment to a merit-based, peer-reviewed grant process, ensuring that funding decisions are made based on scientific excellence and potential impact, free from political or ideological influence.

Changes to this commitment have far-reaching implications. They not only disrupt ongoing research but also erode the confidence of the scientific community in the federal funding apparatus. Moreover, in an era of intense global competition, particularly with nations like China investing heavily in science and technology, these actions risk ceding our leadership position and compromising our ability to address critical challenges. Political meddling by your Administration has already resulted in the termination of over 1,000 grants, totaling approximately \$739 million, and has prompted the resignation of widely respected NSF Director Sethuraman Panchanathan, leaving the NSF without leadership at a critical time.

Given these concerns, we request answers to the following questions:

1. What specific criteria define the "agency priorities" now guiding NSF funding decisions?

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-01396-2>

2. How does the Administration plan to ensure that the NSF's merit-based review process remains intact and free from political interference?
3. What measures are being taken to mitigate the impact of the funding freeze on current research projects and the scientific workforce?
4. How does the Administration intend to maintain the United States' competitive edge in science and technology in light of these policy shifts?

The Administration must reaffirm its commitment to the principles of scientific integrity and merit-based evaluation that have long underpinned the NSF's success. Ensuring transparency and objectivity in research funding is essential not only for the advancement of knowledge but also for maintaining public trust and our nation's global standing.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



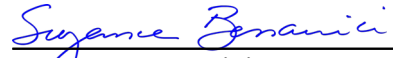
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Paul D. Tonko
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Danny K. Davis
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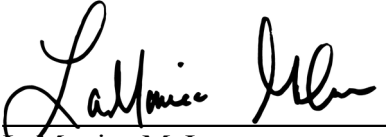
Lloyd Doggett
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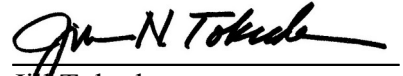
Rashida Tlaib
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LaMonica McIver
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Delia C. Ramirez
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Kevin Mullin
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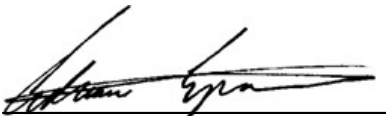
Emanuel Cleaver, II
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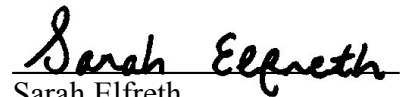
Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



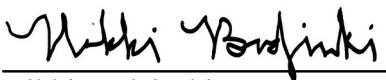
Chrissy Houlahan
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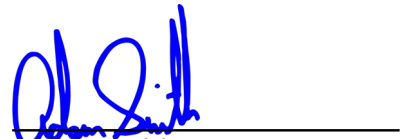
Adriano Espaillat
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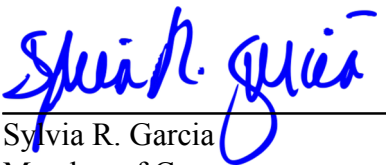
Sarah Elfreth
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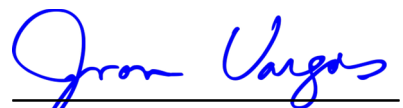
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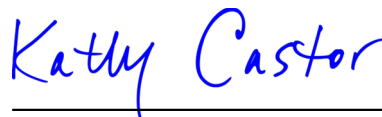
Bonnie Watson Coleman
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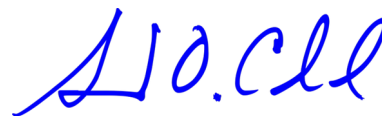
Josh Gottheimer
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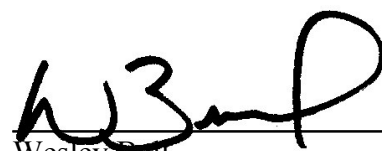
Robert Garcia
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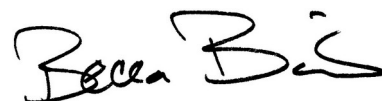
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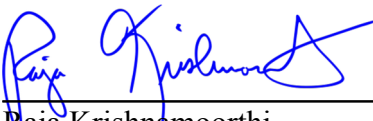
Laura Friedman
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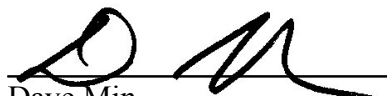
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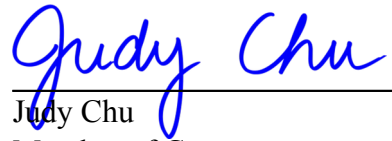
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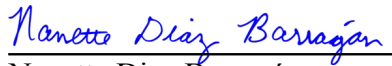
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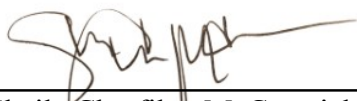
Marcy Kaptur
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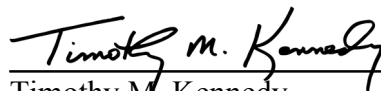
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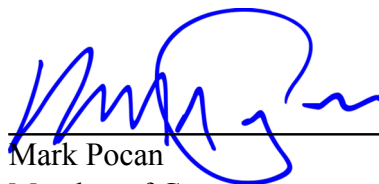
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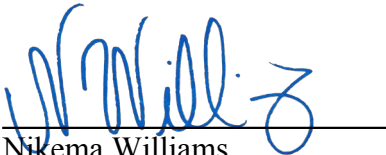
Jared Huffman
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Ranking Member, House
Natural Resources Committee



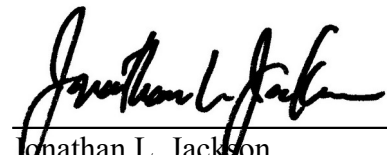
Kim Schrier, M.D.
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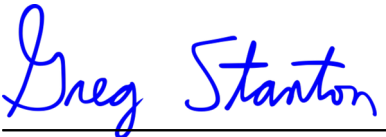
Darren Soto
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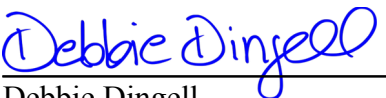
Jonathan L. Jackson
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Joaquin Castro
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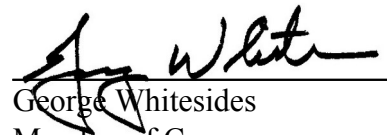
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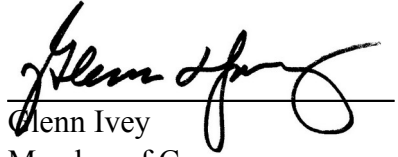
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
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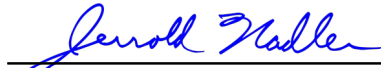
Glenn Ivey
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Julia Brownley
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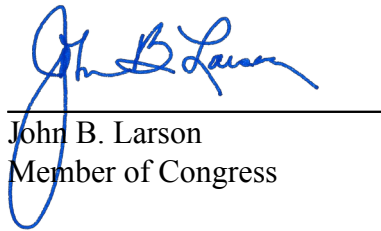
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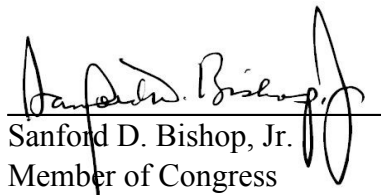
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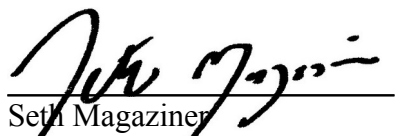
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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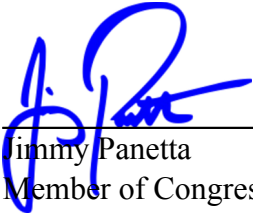
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Dina Titus
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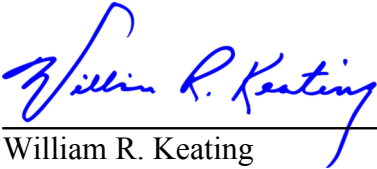
Shri Thanedar
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Jimmy Panetta
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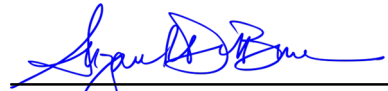
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Mikie Sherrill
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Valerie P. Foushee
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