

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2025

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Vought,

We ask that you stop and reverse any cuts to federal research. Making cuts—whether to federal funding for universities or to federal agencies conducting research—will have severe effects on our economy and national security. Since World War II, the United States has been the global leader in research. Our world-class colleges and universities, combined with a prolific private sector and public investment, have developed and attracted the top minds in the world, leading to discoveries that have contributed significant benefits to our country. Failing to make investments in research will cede leadership to other countries that do not have the same values and priorities as the United States.

Universities have a mission to advance knowledge through learning and discovery. With federal funding, undergraduate and graduate students can participate in research, training them to be productive members of the workforce and simultaneously increasing our knowledge of the world. Universities perform 48 percent of basic research in the United States. Basic research underpins scientific advancement because it is “directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind.”¹

The benefits of basic research are often not known until much later, but serve as the building blocks of further advanced scientific discovery. The federal government is the largest funding source for basic research.² If the \$5 billion in cuts to the National Science Foundation continue as planned, our research ecosystem will suffer in both quality and output.³ If cuts continue, research will cease to occur at the scale we need to have meaningful discoveries.

The benefits of research outweigh any perceived downside. Every dollar invested in non-defense research and development returned between \$1.40 and \$2.10 in economic output.⁴ Research at universities commonly leads to companies spinning out of them, creating good jobs, and bringing new products to the market.⁵

Our national security is also reliant on scientific research. Take agriculture, biotechnology, and space, for example. Food security is national security. As populations grow and climate change presents new

¹ <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/basic-research-definition>

² <https://www.economicstrategygroup.org/publication/seven-recent-developments/#:~:text=Higher%20education%20performs%20the%20greatest,funded%20by%20the%20federal%20government.>

³ https://www.nsf.gov/about/budget/fy2026?utm_

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johndrake/2025/05/19/trumps-nih-and-nsf-cuts-could-cost-the-us-economy-10-billion-annually/>

⁵ <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20241/figure/INV-13>

challenges to farmers, agricultural research is increasingly important. Cutting-edge farming technologies and methods like precision farming, automation, robotics, and disease prevention require additional research to improve on. If successful, we will be able to produce more resilient and affordable food systems. The private sector will profit from this. However, it is the government's responsibility to see that its people have access to food.

The National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology released a report earlier this year that said, "for the first time in recent history, the United States finds itself competing with a rival over a new form of engineering that will create tremendous wealth, but, in the wrong hands, could be used to develop powerful weapons." The report goes on to say we are in a competition with China to be the global leader in biotechnology, and we may lose that race.⁶ Now is not the time to pull back on biotechnology research, but unfortunately, that is the direction our country is trending.

Despite warnings from experts, in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, this administration is proposing to cut the National Institutes of Health funding by 40 percent to less than \$28 billion, \$2.7 billion from the National Cancer Institute, and \$4 billion from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly half its budget.⁷ This signals to China and other nations that this administration is okay with forfeiting our leadership in this field.

This administration is also proposing to cut the NASA budget by nearly 25 percent, or \$6 billion. This cut includes one-third of the workforce. Space is used daily by nearly every American. NASA was created in 1958 in response to the Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite. The space race culminated with NASA's Apollo program landing the first humans on the moon, a monumental achievement. The total cost of the Apollo program was \$25.8 billion, or \$318 billion in 2023 dollars.⁸ That amount of funding could not have come from anywhere other than the federal government. Today, NASA still performs science missions that are economically unviable for any other entity because they do not have immediate commercial benefits.

NASA continues to provide significant benefits to the taxpayer. There are more popular and well-known space missions exploring the origins of our universe and neighboring galaxies. And there are lesser-known science missions studying medicine, earth science, and making improvements in general aviation.

It was not until the last decade that a true commercial space industry emerged in the United States. That would not have been possible without the research and development done by NASA. In fact, the commercial space industry is still nascent and relies on government funding. This is a worthwhile investment by the United States because space is critical to our everyday lives, most notably GPS, but also through services like weather forecasting, wildfire prevention, crop monitoring, illegal fishing enforcement, and several other applications. These uses have led to substantial economic growth. The global space economy was worth an estimated \$596 billion in 2024, and the United States is responsible for a majority of that.⁹

⁶ <https://www.biotech.senate.gov/final-report/chapters/executive-summary/>

⁷ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-2026-health-and-health-care-budget/>

⁸ <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/apollo-moon-space-race-industrial-policy-cost/>

⁹ <https://spacenews.com/the-space-economy-to-reach-944-billion-by-2033-novaspace-unveils-key-insight/>

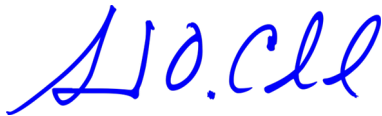
Space is also a keystone to our national security. It is used by every Service to communicate and coordinate, to collect intelligence, provide command and control of our nuclear forces, and for missile warning and detection, among other things. The Department of Defense is investing billions in space programs. For the most part, these investments are a good thing and strengthen our national security. The space superiority we enjoy was not created in a vacuum. The space systems we use today are a product of trillions of dollars in investment into research and development from the public and private sectors over several decades.

Every budget being slashed means jobs being cut. This is expertise that will not be easily rebuilt. This applies to every discipline and emerging technology, whether it be computer science, chemistry, artificial intelligence, or semiconductors. These cuts are causing a brain drain in our nation's research ecosystem.

The federal research landscape is robust, and for good reason. Research is expensive and complicated. We did not become the premier research destination in the world by accident or overnight; it has taken decades of intentional investment to build the United States' research infrastructure. You cannot claim that a strong economy and national security are priorities of this administration when you are undermining both by dismantling systems that support them.

We urge you to cease any further cuts that will inflict further harm to our nation's research capabilities and to reverse all actions taken that have weakened these systems.

Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



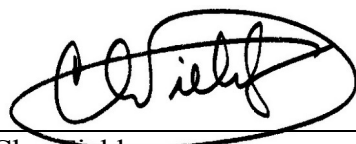
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



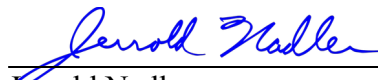
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



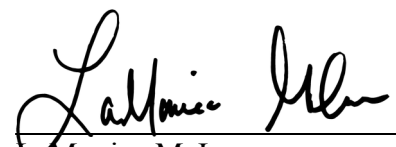
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



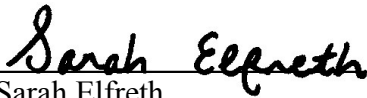
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



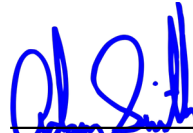
LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



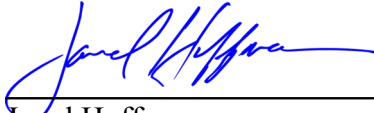
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



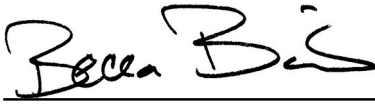
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



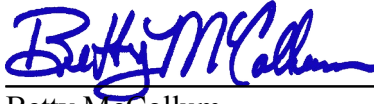
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



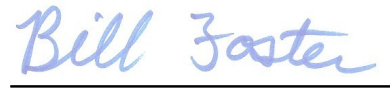
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



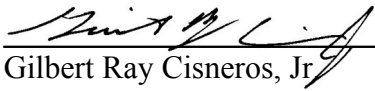
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



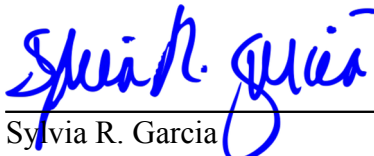
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



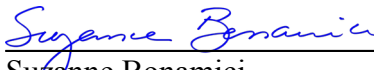
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



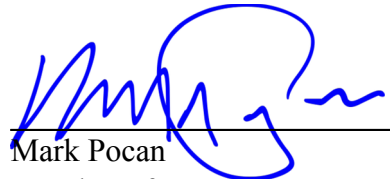
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



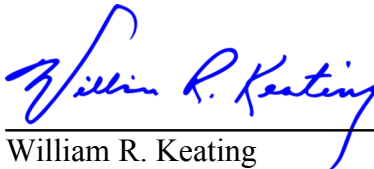
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



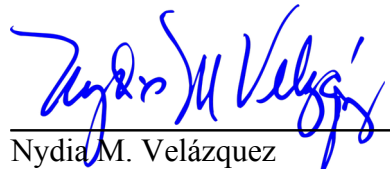
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



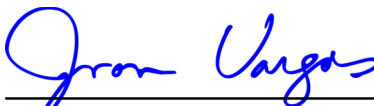
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



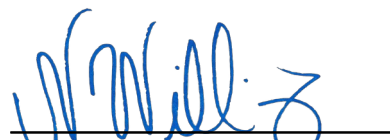
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



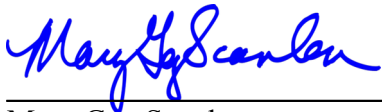
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



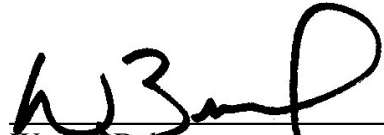
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



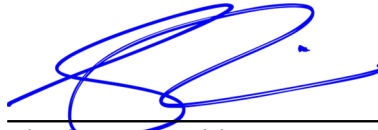
André Carson
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress
Kansas Third District



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



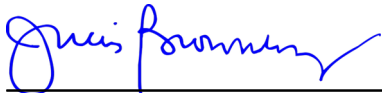
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



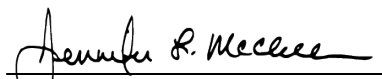
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



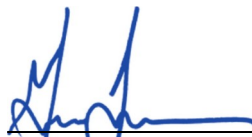
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



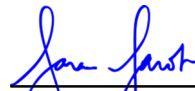
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



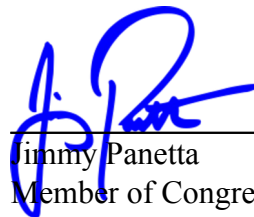
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



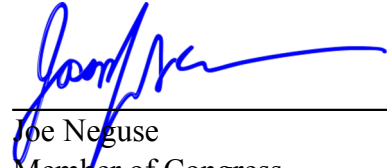
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



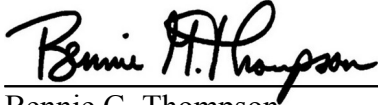
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



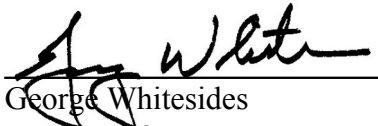
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



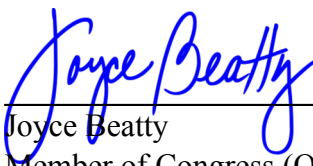
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



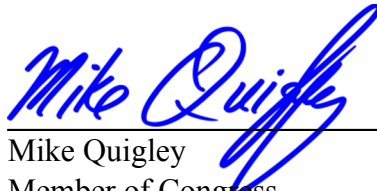
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress (OH-03)



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



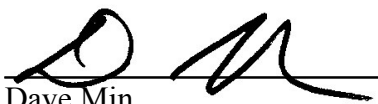
Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



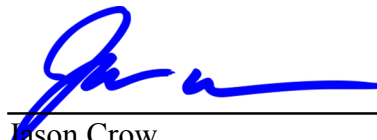
Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



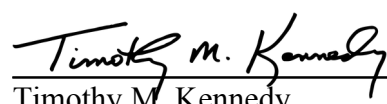
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



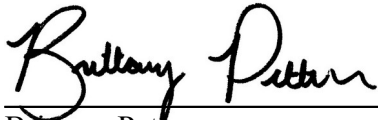
Dave Min
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



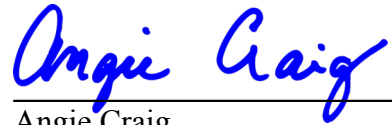
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



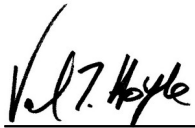
Brittany Petersen
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



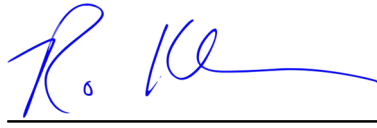
George Latimer
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



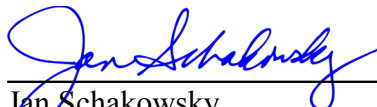
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



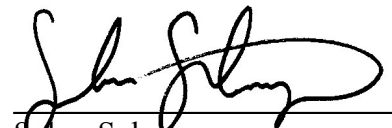
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



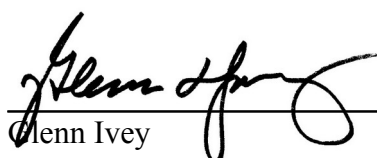
Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



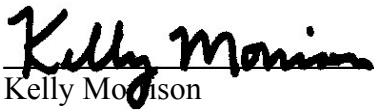
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress




Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress




Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



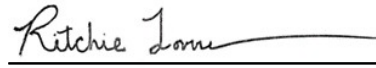
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress



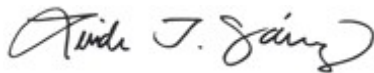
Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress




Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



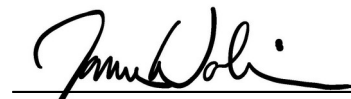
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



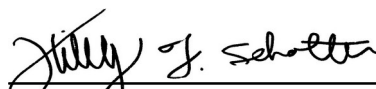
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture

The Honorable Robert Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Acting Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
Department of Defense