

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6371  
www.science.house.gov

February 2, 2025

Sethuraman Panchanathan  
Director  
National Science Foundation  
2415 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Director Panchanathan,

The rich diversity and astounding intellectual capacity of the American people have proven to be among the great creative engines of modern-day scientific advancement. Every American deserves the opportunity to participate and reap the benefits of our nation's scientific enterprise. The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology ("the Committee") has promoted these values on a bipartisan basis for many years. As the Committee's Ranking Member, I am proud to carry this legacy forward by advocating for greater scientific opportunities for Americans of all backgrounds. Anything that undermines the ability of brilliant individuals from every walk of life to participate in scientific endeavors is a threat to American science. It should always be the mission of the federal government to dismantle obstacles to scientific participation. It should never be the policy of the federal government to create them.

President Trump's Executive Order 14151<sup>1</sup>, entitled *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing*, and Executive Order 14173<sup>2</sup>, entitled *Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity*, are comprehensive attacks on the ability of the federal government to promote access to scientific opportunity for all Americans. By forcing federal agencies, including federal research agencies such as NSF, to disband their diversity initiatives and halt funding for related research and programs – judged solely through right wing ideological litmus tests – the Trump Administration is endangering America's capacity to sustain a STEM workforce that attracts the best and brightest minds from all corners of the country. The consequences will be dire. America cannot continue to lead in science and innovation if we erect barriers to scientific participation and leave whole groups of Americans struggling to overcome them.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-and-wasteful-government-dei-programs-and-preferencing/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/>

I am profoundly disturbed by President Trump's attack on American science. I am also disturbed that NSF, which plays such a critical role in supporting scientific research across a broad range of disciplines, appears willing to carry out these destructive policies without pushback or protest. In order to determine the scope of these policies and the extent of the damage being done to the country's scientific enterprise, I request answers to the following questions. Please respond to these questions no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

- What actions has NSF taken since January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to implement Executive Order 14151 and Executive Order 14173 within the agency? Please detail any actions including, but not limited to:
  - Placing NSF employees on administrative leave;
  - Eliminating NSF offices and positions;
  - Halting internal or external agency communications;
  - Altering or removing agency websites;
  - Modifying agency policy or procedural documents, including scientific merit and broader impacts review.
  
- What actions has NSF taken since January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to implement Executive Order 14151 and Executive Order 14173 regarding NSF grantees? Please detail any actions including, but not limited to, the modification, postponement, or cancelation of any existing or prospective research grant to recipient grantees.

Efforts to promote greater scientific diversity in this country did not arise on a whim. Over the course of many decades, this Committee has worked in bipartisan fashion to authorize federal programs and offices that broaden representation across the scientific workforce and harness the intellectual capabilities of Americans throughout society. These laws strengthen American science and enhance our domestic prosperity and international competitiveness. They represent the will of Congress. They are not optional, and they cannot be unilaterally wished away by executive order. You have personally sworn an oath to uphold the Constitution, and NSF is required by law to carry out the directives set forth by Congress. As Ranking Member, I intend to vigorously uphold the Committee's oversight responsibilities and ensure that federal research agencies comply with the law. I will be watching closely to ensure that NSF and its leaders act in accordance with statutory mandates and congressional intent.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Albert Hinman or Sara Palasits with the Committee's Minority staff at (202) 225-6375. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

CC: Chairman Brian Babin  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology