

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

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<http://science.house.gov>

May 12, 2026

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20050

Dear President Trump,

We write to you to express our outrage about the firing of the entire National Science Board (NSB) and to educate you about why this will weaken American scientific competitiveness – an issue you claim to care deeply about. On Friday, April 24, NSB Members received terse emails terminating them from their positions.<sup>1</sup> Of the 22 Members fired that Friday, seven were appointed by you during your first term.<sup>2</sup> This is a clear escalation of your war on American scientific excellence, and we demand that you re-appoint the 22 non-partisan Members to the Board so they can resume their vital work in providing steady, expert advice to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

You repeatedly eviscerated independent scientific advisory boards during your first term.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps at the time, you or your advisors recognized that the structure of the National Science Board made it more difficult to use your go-to attacks on individuals and institutions that do not align with your anti-science agenda. When you took office last year, you picked up where you left off on your campaign against science,<sup>4</sup> and now the battering ram has reached NSB. NSB Members serve staggered six-year terms, meaning that all Presidents have the opportunity to appoint Members, and each outlasts one Presidential term. This ensures that, on the whole, the

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<sup>1</sup> Document on file with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

<sup>2</sup> Archived web page, “Board Members,” National Science Foundation, National Science Board, archived April 25, 2026, accessed here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20260425181540/https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/members>.

<sup>3</sup> Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, “EPA dismisses half of key board’s scientific advisers; Interior suspends more than 200 advisory panels,” *The Washington Post*, May 8, 2017, accessed here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/05/07/epa-dismisses-half-of-its-scientific-advisers-on-key-board-citing-clean-break-with-obama-administration/>.

Board can provide apolitical advice on the activities and future-looking strategy of NSF. This has been the structure since the very establishment of the NSF in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950,<sup>5</sup> and every president for 75 years has respected the independence of the Board. Firing the Board en masse obliterates the very structure that has made it impervious to complete political control. If you choose to replace the Board with loyal cronies or unqualified individuals, this fundamental accountability mechanism that has applied to every other Board for over seven decades will not apply to them. Furthermore, an NSB mirroring the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology’s dramatic overrepresentation of the tech industry would betray a fundamental misunderstanding of what has made NSF unique and successful.<sup>6</sup> These firings are a direct assault on expertise and independence.

We say “if you choose to replace the Board,” and not “when,” because the fig-leaf legal justification you have provided the press would, on its face, preclude you from immediately filling these positions and allowing a new Board to operate as former Boards have. In the days after the news broke about the firings, a White House spokesperson told the media that a 2021 Supreme Court decision “raised constitutional questions about whether non-Senate confirmed appointees can exercise the authorities that Congress gave the National Science Board.”<sup>7</sup> This constitutionality argument is a sham. The case cited, *United States v. Arthrex*, does not necessarily apply to the work of the NSB, as the NSB is not an administrative court. In fact, it is the firings themselves that are legally dubious. While removal criteria for Board Members are not specified in statute, Congress was clear that it intended NSB to have a degree of independence from the Executive – which is the very reason for the six-year staggered terms. Firing the Board was essentially a middle finger to Congressional intent, making your spokesperson’s claim that you “look forward to working with the Hill to update the statute and ensure the NSB can perform its duties as Congress intended” particularly ludicrous.<sup>8</sup> We still await your outreach on this matter.

You offer very little reason to provide you the benefit of the doubt when it comes to weakening American scientific competitiveness. However, we would be remiss not to take this opportunity to educate you on the damage you are inflicting on American excellence by taking a wrecking ball to the NSB. Per the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, nominees to the

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<sup>4</sup> Laura Ungar and Amanda Seitz, “RFK Jr. ousts entire CDC vaccine advisory committee,” *AP News*, June 9, 2025, accessed here: <https://apnews.com/article/kennedy-cdc-acip-vaccines-3790c89f45b6314c5c7b686db0e3a8f9>.

<sup>5</sup> 42 USC 1861: Establishment; composition, from Title 42 – The Public Health and Welfare, Chapter 16 – National Science Foundation, accessed here: [https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:42%20section:1861%20edition:prelim\)#:~:text=hereby%20established%20the-,Executive%20Committee%20of%20the%20National%20Science%20Board,-%2C%20hereafter%20in%20this](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:42%20section:1861%20edition:prelim)#:~:text=hereby%20established%20the-,Executive%20Committee%20of%20the%20National%20Science%20Board,-%2C%20hereafter%20in%20this).

<sup>6</sup> Dan Garisto, “Trump’s new science panel includes 9 tech billionaires – and just one scientist,” *Scientific American*, March 27, 2026, accessed here: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trumps-new-science-panel-includes-9-tech-billionaires-and-just-one-scientist/>.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Garisto, “Entire NSF science advisory board fired by Trump administration,” *Nature*, April 26, 2026, accessed here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-01361-7>.

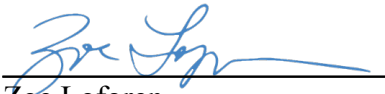
<sup>8</sup> Scott Neuman and Katia Riddle, “Scientists see Trump’s firing of the National Science Board as an attack on research,” *NPR*, April 28, 2026, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/2026/04/28/nx-s1-5801465/national-science-board-trump-firing>.

NSB are required to be eminently qualified in scientific, medical, educational, or research management-related fields, and they are required to have established records of distinguished service.<sup>9</sup> Because the Board is supposed to “provide representation of the views of scientific and engineering leaders in all areas of the Nation,” it serves as a steady, forward-looking guide to ensure that NSF has an eye across diverse disciplines and geographies and not get overly preoccupied with bending to the winds of politics or trends. It is notable that you took this radical action of firing the NSB while in the backdrop, your nominee for NSF Director would be the first Director in NSF’s seven-decade existence who is not a scientist or engineer, as he lacks both a technical degree and any research experience.

The writing is on the wall, and it spells disaster for our scientific excellence. For over 75 years, the National Science Foundation has been the envy of the world. Our allies and adversaries alike have sought to emulate it, so they could attempt to nurture similarly boundary-pushing scientific ecosystems. Amongst our own scientific agencies, it is a crown jewel, setting the standard for scientific excellence. Purging the 22 scientists who are responsible for guiding NSF is the nail in the coffin for an agency that has weathered 15 months of attacks by you and your ignorant cronies.

We demand that you reinstate the Board immediately. Your dismissal of the Board does nothing to address the alleged constitutionality questions, which can only be addressed through legislation. You are welcome to reach out to Congress at any time to propose a solution to the problem you claim exists. In the meantime, allow the National Science Board to resume its activities at once.

Sincerely,



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



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



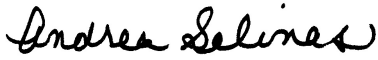
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress

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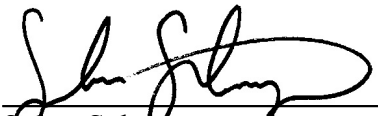
<sup>9</sup> “About the NSB,” National Science Foundation, National Science Board, (emphasis added) accessed here: <https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/about>.



Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress



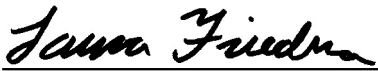
Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress



Sunas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



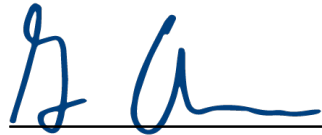
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



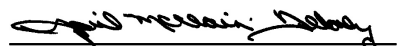
Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress



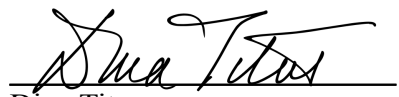
Luz M. Rivas  
Member of Congress



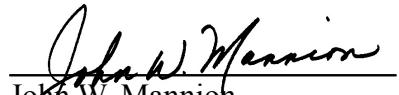
George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion  
Member of Congress



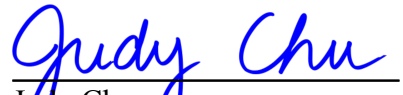
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress




Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



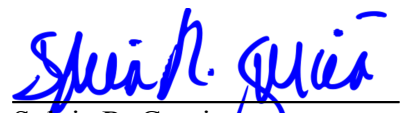
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



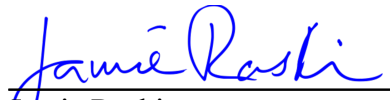
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



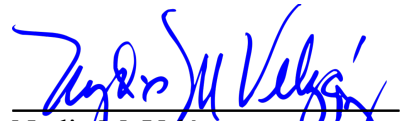
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



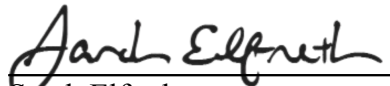
Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress