

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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August 6, 2026

The Honorable Michael Kratsios
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Kratsios,

Just two weeks ago, you had the opportunity to come before the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to “examine the priorities of the FY2027 Research and Technology Enterprise.”¹ Sixteen hours before you were due to appear, you chose to release a 123-page report on “Science: A New Golden Age,” which you described as “a blueprint for renewing American scientific leadership for the 21st century.”² This release came with no formal notification to the Science Committee, despite your appearance the next day to discuss precisely these issues. We mention this to note that we have no reason to be surprised that you chose to continue this pattern of obfuscation and disrespect of the Committee’s oversight prerogatives at the hearing itself. We write to demand that the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) be transparent with the Committee regarding recent reporting of an OSTP-led initiative called “Grand Research Challenges.”³

The July 24 *Nature* reporting confirmed rumors that have been swirling about OSTP diverting resources from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to fund your pet priorities. These rumors underpinned multiple lines of questions posed to you at the July 22 hearing:

¹ “Full Committee Hearing – Unleashing the Golden Age of Science: Examining the Priorities of the FY2027 Research and Technology Enterprise,” House Committee on Science, Space, & Technology, July 22, 2026, accessed here: https://science.house.gov/hearings?ContentRecord_id=445B0E7D-C8CD-4B8F-B68A-73DAC913D565.

² “In response to @POTUS’s call for a revival of America’s scientific enterprise, today I’m releasing Science: A New Golden Age. This report is a blueprint for renewing American scientific leadership for the 21st century.” Director Michael Kratsios, X, July 21, 2026, accessed here: <https://x.com/mkratsios47/status/2079692038627532896>.

³ Dan Garisto and Kaia Glickman, “White House rolls out AI funding – and signals a new era for U.S. Science,” *Nature*, July 24, 2026, accessed here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-02332-8>.

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren: “Where is the nearly \$1 billion that we know is being clawed back from NSF Directorates, and what is the reported \$1.5 billion project – to quote Nature’s reporting – that is a ‘brainchild of the White House OSTP?’ And if you could be specific, is any of the \$5 billion you announced today coming from the money appropriated to NSF?”

Director Kratsios: “I’m not familiar with those details, I would refer you to NSF.”

It is incomprehensible that, on the morning of July 22, you were unfamiliar with the details of what would be reported just two days later as the exfiltration of \$300 million from NSF’s mathematics and physical sciences directorates to fund an OSTP-led program. It is even more incomprehensible when considered alongside what you said just moments later, when responding to this same question:

Director Kratsios: “As a nation, we should be more deliberative and specific about trying to tackle *grand challenges*.” [Emphasis added.]

It is deeply strange and disrespectful that you chose to dodge a question about this very program while mockingly referencing its name. Congressional testimony is not a joke. You agreed to testify before the Science Committee about the FY2027 priorities of the scientific enterprise, and then you decided to elide discussion of this expensive program that you are undertaking without any Congressional authorization or input. If you believe this is legal, appropriate, and a good use of taxpayer money in order to bring about a “golden age of science,” then you should have been eager to discuss it before the Committee. Instead, you chose to apparently mislead the Committee about whether you had any understanding of where NSF’s disappearing money is going.

We understand that it would be rather uncomfortable to testify comprehensively and truthfully before the Science Committee about how you are in the process of absorbing hundreds of millions of dollars of appropriated money from an agency under the Committee’s jurisdiction. If you were unfamiliar with your obligation to be truthful before Congress ahead of the hearing, you were reminded of this during questioning by Representative George Whitesides about whether and how OSTP is involved in ensuring money it would prefer to use for its own projects is not, instead, spent as Congress intended, on NSF research awards:

Representative Whitesides: “Earlier, you testified that NSF grant approvals have not been reviewed by political officials at OSTP ... I want to give you the chance to make sure that that’s what you wanted to testify, because we have been directly informed that this is not true. Is it still your testimony today that no one at OSTP is playing a role in individual NSF grant approvals?”

Director Kratsios: “I am not personally involved in any individual grant approvals.”

Representative Whitesides: “That is a different answer to what I asked.”

Director Kratsios: “I am not aware of anyone at OSTP that is working on individual grant approvals. I have never asked for that, and I would never condone that, and I don’t think any of us are.”

Representative Whitesides: “Ok, for the record, it is a felony to testify falsely before Congress.”

Director Kratsios: “I am well aware of that, and I’m also well aware that no one at OSTP is involved in individual grant-level decisions.”

Representative Whitesides: “Is anyone at OSTP involved in some kind of grouping of grant decisions?”

Director Kratsios: “I’m not familiar with what a grouping of a grant decision is. But when an individual grant for a particular research project is made, we are certainly not involved in that.”

Representative Whitesides: “Ok, sounds a little squishy to me.”

It is, indeed, squishy to direct focus entirely on “an individual grant for a particular research project” when being asked about any broader influence OSTP is attempting to exert on NSF grantmaking. No thanks to your testimony, Science Committee Democrats know these facts, based on reporting and well corroborated sources: OSTP is exerting influence over NSF decision making, certainly on Notices of Funding Opportunities and potentially on at least a subset of grant decisions;⁴ NSF is 30-40% behind where it was last year at this time on getting money out the door;⁵ OSTP intends to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to fund your priority projects, and that money was not appropriated to OSTP by Congress.

You chose not to be transparent about this reported “Grand Research Challenges” program when you had the chance before the Committee. As Members of the Minority, at this time, we lack the ability to compel you to be forthright via testimony at a hearing. We request that you brief us on the “Grand Research Challenges” program by August 14, 2026. The briefing must include an explanation of the program, a breakdown of how this program is being funded, and a thorough description of how OSTP has been involved in the internal processes at NSF, so the Committee can understand what influence OSTP has exerted in NSF’s failure to spend appropriated money while you have seemingly found enough funding to push forward your pet priorities.

Pursuant to Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology “shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development.”⁶ If you have any questions

⁴ Documents on file with the Committee.

⁵ `Noam Ross, “A Tale of Two Funding Charts,” *Grant Witness*, June 30, 2026, accessed here: <https://grant-witness.us/posts/2026-06-30-nsf-tale-of-two-charts/>.

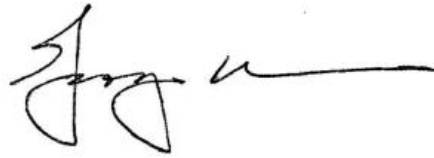
⁶ [119 First Session House Rules](#).

regarding this letter, please contact Sara Palasits or Albert Hinman 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



George Whitesides
Member
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology

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

Brian Stone, Chief of Staff, Performing the Duties of the Director of the National Science Foundation