

POSITION STATEMENT:

Congress Must Put an End to Unlawful NIH Grant Cancellations

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SUMMARY STATEMENT

Congress must prevent the termination of NIH research grants that have already been awarded through lawful, competitive processes. Legislators must use their constitutional spending authority to ensure agencies execute appropriated funds, to ensure funding efficiency, life-saving medical innovation, and U.S. scientific competitiveness globally.



IMPORTANCE OF FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the largest funder of biomedical and behavioral research, enabling researchers to develop new cancer screenings and treatments, as well as a variety of other types of research aiming to better the health of the country.¹ Research funding from NIH directly and indirectly supported 407,782 jobs in 2024, and contributed \$94.58 billion in economic activity.² With \$2.7 billion in funding being cut, the termination of NIH grants could cost the economy as much as \$16 billion, with an estimated loss of 68,000 jobs across the country.³⁻⁴ These grant cuts could slow important research being done on chronic disease such as cancer and cardiovascular disease.⁵⁻⁶ The grant cancellations are damaging local economies, harming patients, and destroying U.S. medical innovation while competitors like China advance.

THE PROBLEM AND CURRENT POLICIES

1. Improper Grant Cancellation Rationale

Some NIH grants—particularly those involving vaccines, health disparities, or international collaboration—have been paused or terminated after undergoing full scientific peer review and receiving federal appropriations. The assertions in the termination notices about lack of scientific validity, rigor, or public health benefit contradict the conclusions of NIH, external scientists, and panels of experts who reviewed the grant projects and chose to award them in the first place based on the rigor of the study's design and the project's likelihood of addressing a pressing biomedical-research issue⁷. Notably, these

grant terminations are not based on scientific misconduct or performance issues. In fact, court filings show that at least some termination letters were drafted not by NIH or Department of Health and Human Services staff, but rather by employees of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).⁷

Since February 7, 2025, 91 of the cancelled NIH grants have impacted active clinical trials investigating critical areas such as HIV, cancer, mental health, LGBTQ health and COVID-19, resulting in a staggering loss of approximately \$643 million in research funding.⁸ These abrupt grant terminations have halted important clinical trials, compromising the progress of medical advancements that benefit those with debilitating chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes, the leading causes of death in the United States.⁹⁻¹⁰

2. Lack of Transparency and Oversight

NIH has cancelled or delayed grants without providing Congress or the public with adequate justification.

- Under Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 of the U.S. Constitution, only Congress may appropriate funds. Once appropriated and awarded through proper channels, those funds must be executed in accordance with congressional intent.¹¹
- The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 prohibits the Executive Branch from withholding appropriated funds unless Congress is notified and approves such action.¹² However, this principle has not been applied clearly to post-award grant cancellations.

*Endorsing organizations do not write or have any control over position statement content.
Authors declare they have no conflicts of interest.*



RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent grant cancellations other than those related to scientific misconduct, we urge Congress to take the following actions:

1. Conduct Oversight Hearings Focused on NIH Grant Interference

- Direct the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) to investigate the NIH grant cancellation practices,^{3,9} including by obtaining testimony from NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya.
- Request or subpoena internal communications from DOGE regarding suspended or terminated NIH grants.⁶

2. Introduce or Support Legislation to Protect Against Grant Cancellations and Ensure Predictable and Efficient Funding

- Introduce legislation limiting NIH grant termination and rescission to instances of fraud and scientific misconduct only.^{2,4}
- Require the NIH to notify the House and Senate Appropriations and Authorizing Committees in advance of any such action.
- Model the statute on the Impoundment Control Act to ensure that Congress—not political appointees—controls the execution of federal science funding.⁵

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SIGN-ONS

- AcademyHealth
- American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
- American Association of Immunologists
- American Society for Microbiology
- American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET)
- Bridgeport Prosper
- Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas
- Endocrine Society
- Families United for Change
- Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research (FSR)
- ICWUC Center for Worker Health and Safety Education
- National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
- National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
- PIRE: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
- Society for Prevention Research
- Society for Psychophysiological Research
- Society for Public Health Education
- Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
- The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)