



May 13, 2026

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Hon. Grace Meng  
Ranking Member  
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Commerce, Justice, Science, and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Moran, Ranking Member Van Hollen, Chair Rogers, Ranking Member Meng, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for your leadership and service to our nation. [Research!America](https://www.researchamerica.org) is a non-profit, nonpartisan advocacy alliance dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific, medical, and public health progress. The National Science Foundation (NSF) is central to that mission, and we appreciate your role in advancing this agency and your continued commitment to sustaining American scientific leadership, economic competitiveness, and national security.

It is because of NSF's indispensable role in the nation's scientific and economic strength that we write to express deep concern regarding the Administration's proposed reductions to the agency.

The proposal would cut NSF funding by approximately 55 percent overall, including a 52 percent reduction to the Research and Related Activities account, major cuts to core scientific directorates, elimination of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE), and substantial reductions in research infrastructure and STEM education. Taken together, these proposals would drastically weaken America's scientific capacity, economic competitiveness, and national security at a time of intensifying global competition.

Among the many concerning elements of the proposal, the elimination of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) is particularly illustrative of the broader challenge these cuts present. At a time when competitor nations, including China, are pursuing coordinated strategies that integrate technological advancement with deep understanding of human behavior, workforce dynamics, economic resilience, and societal adoption of innovation, eliminating SBE would send a counterproductive signal about U.S. priorities and risk weakening an important dimension of America's strategic advantage.

SBE research is a force multiplier for federal investments in science and technology. Advances in artificial intelligence, public health, energy, cybersecurity, and defense depend not only on technical breakthroughs, but also on understanding how individuals, organizations, and societies respond to new technologies and policies. SBE research helps ensure that federally supported innovations are adopted effectively, deployed efficiently, trusted by the public, and capable of delivering meaningful real-world impact.

SBE research delivers substantial economic and national security benefits. NSF-supported research in behavioral science, decision-making, and human-computer interaction helped lay the foundation for major advances in the digital economy and has informed policies and practices that improve healthcare delivery, consumer protection, workforce participation, and retirement savings outcomes.

At the same time, agencies including the Department of Defense, DARPA, and the Department of Homeland Security rely on social and behavioral science insights to better understand resilience, misinformation, workforce dynamics, and human behavior in complex operational environments. Weakening this capacity would diminish an important strategic advantage for the United States.

We respectfully urge you to reject the proposed 55 percent reduction to NSF and the broader dismantling of core scientific capacity reflected throughout this proposal, including the elimination of the SBE directorate. Sustained U.S. leadership in science and technology requires strength across disciplines, including the social and behavioral sciences that help translate discovery into economic growth, national security, public trust, and real-world benefit for the American people. At a moment of intensifying global competition, weakening NSF would be both strategically and economically counterproductive.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued bipartisan leadership in support of the nation's scientific enterprise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russ Paulsen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Russ Paulsen  
President and CEO  
Research!America