

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2026

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy
Secretary
Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dr. Jayanta "Jay" Bhattacharya
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Director Vought, Secretary Kennedy, and Director Bhattacharya:

We write regarding the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) administration of ongoing research grants as the agency works to align its research portfolio with the priorities of the Administration.

We appreciate the Administration's commitment to ensuring federal research investments advance rigorous, results-oriented science, improve health outcomes, and responsibly steward taxpayer dollars. We support efforts to ensure NIH funding reflects these priorities and strengthens America's leadership in biomedical research and innovation.

As NIH implements these priorities, we encourage the Administration to carefully consider the potential effects of terminating ongoing, multi-year research grants after significant federal resources have already been invested. Where an existing project can reasonably be modified to align with current priorities, allowing researchers to make appropriate changes may help advance the Administration's objectives while preserving the value of taxpayer investments already made.

Scientific research often requires sustained investment over several years. NIH-funded researchers may hire specialized personnel, recruit study participants, establish research cohorts, and make other commitments based on approved multi-year awards. Changes to ongoing grants can therefore have effects beyond an individual award, particularly when projects are nearing completion or researchers have already worked with NIH to modify their work in response to updated agency guidance.

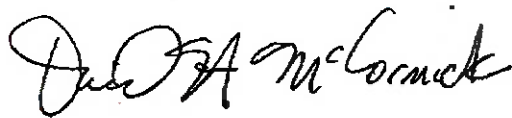
A stable and effective research environment is also important to maintaining America's global leadership in biomedical science. The United States faces growing competition from China and other nations seeking leadership in biotechnology, medicine, and other critical fields. Clear and consistent administration of federal research awards can help ensure American institutions

continue to attract leading scientists, pursue ambitious research, and translate discoveries into new treatments and technologies.

We therefore encourage NIH, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Office of Management and Budget to consider, where appropriate, opportunities to bring existing research projects into alignment with current priorities instead of terminating ongoing awards. This could include considering the progress of the research, the federal resources already invested, the feasibility of modifying the project, and the potential scientific and public health value of allowing the work to reach completion.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure NIH funding is administered responsibly, advances the health of the American people, and keeps American science first in the world.

Sincerely,



David H. McCormick
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator