

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

May 8, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Brian Stone
Chief of Staff, Performing the duties of the NSF Director
National Science Foundation
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Honorable Michael Kratsios
Assistant to the President and Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
1650 17th St NW
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear President Trump, Mr. Stone, and Director Kratsios,

I write to you to express concern and disappointment regarding your removal of all members of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) National Science Board (NSB). It is critically important that the United States continue to lead the world in the advancement of scientific research and development, and the NSB plays an essential role in that work. This misguided decision risks undermining the integrity of the NSF and our nation's global leadership in research and innovation.

The NSB helps guide the critical work of NSF by approving the agency's strategic budget direction, approving the annual budget submissions to the Office of Management and Budget, approving new major programs and awards, and establishing agency policies. The NSB also provides essential independent and non-partisan scientific guidance to Congress and the President. In addition to academics, NSB members include representatives from American national labs, private industry and nonprofits – our leaders in scientific research and advancement.

Despite the critically important role of the NSB, on Friday, April 24, all 22 seated members of the board received notice they had been “terminated, effective immediately” and were not provided with a justification for their removal. It is my understanding that by the following Monday, board members were unable to log in and access their NSF accounts and emails. The administration has not provided written explanation or justification for the removal of the board members. Following these removals, thirteen former Directors of the National Science Foundation and Chairs of the National Science Board wrote to administrative and congressional officials urging the immediate restoration of the full leadership and governance at NSF.

To help safeguard the NSB's independence, Congress directed that board members be appointed in staggered six-year terms. While the authorizing legislation gives the President the authority to

remove the NSF Director, it does not provide such authority over board members. This inclusion of removal for the Director but not board members shows clear Congressional intent to preserve NSB's independence.

Additionally, the timing of these removals raises significant concerns. Troublingly, these removals occurred just before the statutorily mandated May meeting of NSB members. It was anticipated that the NSB would be releasing a report regarding the United States ceding scientific ground to China at the May 4, 2026 meeting.

This action continues the troubling trend of this administration undermining the advancement of American scientific research. Last year, NSF cancelled over 1500 grants that had already been awarded, including nearly \$18 million in grants to Wisconsin. Last summer, the administration suddenly announced their intent to remove NSF staff from their custom designed office building and relocated them to a smaller office space. In his latest proposed budget to Congress, President Trump suggested cutting funding to NSF by over 55 percent. All of these actions convey to the American scientific community, our global competitors, and private industry a disregard for critical American scientific research and development.

The work of the National Science Foundation is critical to maintain and advance the United States' global competitiveness. With concerns that the People's Republic of China is investing more on scientific research and development, it is now more important than ever for the United States government to support the scientific community to advance independent research.

Please provide answers to the following questions by June 8, 2026:

1. What is the legal authority and justification for removing all members of the National Science Board?
2. What is the policy justification for removing all members of the National Science Board?
3. What office or official made the decision to remove all members of the National Science Board?
4. Does the administration intend to continue utilizing the National Science Board and if so, what is the plan and timeline for filling or reappointing board members?
5. Does the administration intend to still release the report drafted by the National Science Board on U.S. competitiveness with China, and if so, when will that report be released?

I look forward to your prompt responses to this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Science, Manufacturing, and Competitiveness
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation