

CUGH Call to Action:

New Proposed Regulations Politicize and Severely Weaken US Research

June 5, 2026

Federally funded research in the United States has contributed to major advances in medicine, public health, economic growth, technology and national security. It has historically received bipartisan support since there has been a longstanding recognition that protecting scientific integrity benefits all Americans regardless of their political affinity.

Publicly funded research has been governed by a straightforward principle: federal dollars should fund the best science, as determined by independent experts rather than politicians. Peer review, open competition, and institutional autonomy were the pillars of that system. New regulations proposed by the US Administration will dismantle all three pillars simultaneously. They will be government-wide, and binding on every federal agency by October 1, 2026.

What OMB is proposing would extend political oversight into virtually every stage of the federal research funding process, fundamentally altering the traditional balance between scientific peer review, agency discretion, and institutional autonomy. This will profoundly damage the US' preeminent position as the world leader in scientific research and will undermine the international scientific partnerships that are essential for pandemic preparedness, infectious disease control, workforce development, economic, and environmental sustainability in the US and globally.

The proposed changes will do the following:

- Before a competition opens, every program must be designed to align with the President's policy priorities, not scientific need, statutory mandate, or expert consensus.
- When opportunities are announced, agencies can restrict who is eligible, and the agency head can exempt solicitations from public posting under a broad national interest exception.
- When applications are reviewed, political appointees must personally evaluate every discretionary grant. Peer review is explicitly reduced to advisory status. Appointees are forbidden from deferring to scientific experts.
- When awards are made, grants can be conditioned on compliance with an undefined "Gold Standard Science" standard, and institutions can be disqualified based on their affiliations or

the political character of their prior work.

- During the research itself, scientists cannot attend conferences, join professional societies, subscribe to journals, or publish in peer-reviewed journals without express agency pre-approval. Each of those approvals can simply be withheld.
- At any moment, an active grant, including a multi-year award already mid-project, can be terminated because a political appointee decides it no longer aligns with agency priorities. No finding of misconduct is required.
- When results are ready to share, publication costs are presumptively unallowable, and any public communication that could be labeled issue advocacy on a sensitive topic puts the entire award at risk.

These regulations will severely compromise the US scientific community's professional infrastructure, including conferences, journals, international collaborations, and open access publishing. The damage these regulations will inflict on America's research capacity will harm the US in countless ways.

OUR CALL TO ACTION:

1. SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS ON THESE REGULATIONS ONLINE TO:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/OMB-2026-0034-0001>

- **Suggestions on how to comment most effectively can be found here:** [What We Need to do NEXT: OMB's Proposed Federal Financial Assistance Rule \(OMB-2026-0034\)](#)
- **The public comment period closes on July 13, 2026.**

2. SHARE THIS CALL TO ACTION AND MOBILIZE YOUR NETWORKS TO SUBMIT COMMENTS.

Scientists, universities, scientific societies, organizations, state governments, and the public all have standing to comment. Your input matters!

- For additional information contact the Consortium of Universities for Global Health, Washington DC: info@cugh.org or 202-974-6363

With gratitude and acknowledgement to Elizabeth Ginexi for her analysis.

Additional links relating to these regulations are:

- A breakdown of what is being proposed: <https://elizabethginexi.substack.com/p/summary-of-key-changes-in-ombs-proposed>
- Nature - an analysis: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-01779-z>