

Subject: July 28 Newsletter

To attach:



July 28, 2025

To our fellow friends of science,

In this letter, we want to share our **Strategic Plan** that outlines our goals and actionable items, as well as ongoing projects where [we need your help!](#) We reiterate our commitment to the fight to protect science and assure you that we have been working hard to lay the foundations for a sustained and effective movement in support of science. We're also sharing updates from the federal level including a Declaration of Dissent from NASA employees and concerning news from the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as a welcomed development out of the Iowa Board of Regents.

Sincerely in science,
Stand Up for Science Iowa

State & Federal News

Iowa Board of Regents postpones vote on anti-DEI and CRT policy. Back in June, the Iowa Board of Regents (BOR) had a meeting at the University of Iowa, where one agenda item was discussion of a proposed policy, "Chapter 3.23—DEI and CRT Requirements." While the policy was originally scheduled to be voted on at that meeting, concerned community members (including you all!) emailed the BOR members and [made public comments](#) voicing your concerns. At that time the BOR decided to revise the proposed policy and postpone the vote until their next meeting on July 30th. Now the [BOR has decided to further delay the vote!](#) This means that *our efforts are working!* We want to thank everyone that emailed, spoke at Public Comment, came to the meeting/rally, and stood with us in solidarity. Please see below for more opportunities to help us earn more victories by supporting our **Strategic Plan**.

EPA Cuts Research Arm. The Environmental Protection Agency is planning to [shut down their scientific research arm](#) that provides expertise for environmental policies and regulations by closing the Office of Research and Development. The Office of Research and Development analyzes hazards, including toxic chemicals, climate change, water pollution, and drinking water pollutants. This action is in response to the Administration's continued reduction of federal

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agencies, which includes a planned 23% staff cut to the EPA. While the dissolution of the EPA research arm will affect everyone, we know that the issues of environmental toxins are particularly relevant to us in Iowa, from our state's highest in the country [radon levels](#), extensive [pesticide exposures](#), and elevated [nitrates in our drinking water](#). This cut puts at risk our health and the health of future generations of Iowans. *We encourage you to [sign the Declaration of Dissent](#) from EPA employees speaking out against administrative actions. Importantly, we encourage you to help us spread the word about this harmful Administrative action—tell your friends, family, and community how this may affect us here in Iowa.*

Scientists and staff at NASA issue The NASA Voyager Declaration. Last week, over 300 current and former employees at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) issued [The NASA Voyager Declaration](#), a formal dissent addressed to Interim Administrator Sean Duffy. The statement outlines concerns about recent policy changes that threaten the mission, science advancements, and workforce of NASA. It also speaks out against proposed funding cuts. *We encourage you to [sign](#) in support of these brave employees.*

The presidential administration's [FY2026 Proposed Budget](#) threatens to cut NASA funding by 24%, slashing 50% of their scientific portfolio. Moreover, the current administration has drastically altered the NASA workforce, as [4,000 employees \(about 20% of their staff\) have left NASA through the administration's deferred resignation program](#). The attacks on NASA have spurred protests, including outside of [NASA Glenn](#) in Ohio and [NASA Headquarters](#) in DC.

We feel that this is an important time to highlight how NASA innovations impact our everyday life: many phone cameras contain technology originally [developed at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab](#) for space missions; [handheld vacuum technology](#) began at NASA as a Moon Tool to capture samples from the moon; [wireless headphones](#) are built off technology that allowed astronauts and call center staff to have comfortable, reliable headsets for communication; [GPS systems](#) are largely built off technology from NASA (for extra fun, look into [Dr. Gladys West's work](#) that eventually became the basis for the GPS); NASA has contributed to medical knowledge and advancements, such with [CT and MRI scan technology](#), and helping us [better understand human health](#). These examples only scratch the surface of how NASA's pioneering work in space exploration not only inspires us to dream bigger, but also improves our everyday lives.

NASA employees join federal workers at the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) and [National Institute of Health](#) (NIH) who had previously issued formal dissents.

Republican senators urge White House to release delayed NIH funds. [14 Republican Senators have sounded the alarm about the "slow disbursement rate" of National Institutes of Health funding](#), writing a letter to White House Budget Chief to "fully implement" the funds. While in the letter they expressed confidence in Health and Human Services Secretary RFK Jr. and NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, they note "withholding or suspending these funds would jeopardize that trust and hinder progress on critical health challenges facing our nation. Ultimately, this is about finding cures and seeing them through to fruition." The signers are: Sens. Katie Britt (Ala.), John Boozman (Ark.), Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), Bill Cassidy (La.), Susan Collins (Maine), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Dave McCormick (Pa.), Mitch McConnell (Ky.), Jerry Moran (Kansas), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Thom Tillis (N.C.), Todd Young (Ind.), Dan

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Sullivan (Alaska) and Tim Scott (S.C.). *This action is an important representation of the broad support for scientific research that spans across party lines.*

Our Strategic Plan & How You Can Get Involved

As you may remember, our group came together quickly in March in response to abrupt research cuts, censorship, and attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion in science. In the short time since, we've made progress and continued to grow our network. Highlights include organizing and speaking at rallies in Iowa City, helping orchestrate the McClintock Letter Op-Ed initiative to bring scientists' voices to the public, speaking out against the Board of Regent's proposed anti-DEI and CRT policy, and continuing our newsletter series to keep you informed. National SUFS has also been active, focusing on organizing with federal agencies to issue dissents by employees from federal scientific agencies and supporting state locals, like ours.

While this summer has had fewer events, we assure you that we are more energized than ever. We're focused on building a sustainable movement—and **we need your help to make it happen!** Below, you will find our **Strategic Plan** and a list of our ongoing projects. If any of them fit your interests and talents, please [fill out our volunteer form](#). We would love to have you on board!

We remain committed to our three core policy goals: 1) End Censorship and Political Interference in Science, 2) Secure and Expand Scientific Funding, and 3) Defend Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Science.

To achieve these goals, we are focusing on two **specific aims**: 1) communicating the importance of science and scientific research funding to our local communities, and 2) raising awareness of current and proposed federal scientific funding cuts. While most U.S. adults across all political parties believe that science benefits people like them and want it free from political influence, most are only [vaguely aware](#) of recent federal science policy changes. This is a *critical need* that we aim to address.

Aim 1: Sharing the importance of science. In Iowa, we are focusing on issues that deeply impact our communities: 1) cancer rates, which are among the [highest in the nation](#), 2) science support of [sustainable and productive agriculture](#), a cornerstone of our economy and identity, and 3) environmental health. We're building community partnerships with organizations that work closely with rural Iowans and farmers who share our concerns. These issues are timely, relevant, and deeply connected to science and research. Our role is to make those connections clear.

How we are doing this:

- **a) Tabling at Farmer's Markets** (with [Food and Water Watch](#)): We are sharing how science is relevant to life in Iowa and listening to community concerns. (*Interested in tabling with us? [Let us know!](#)*)
- **b) Local Media** (in collaboration with a Campaign to Save Cancer Research): We are sharing personal stories to highlight the need for sustained cancer research funding. (*Are you a cancer researcher or patient? [Share your story!](#)*)

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- **c) Data analytics project:** Coders & librarians in our community are examining how past federal grants to organizations in Iowa have benefited Iowans. We show what would have been lost if the current funding cuts had happened 10 years ago, demonstrating the harmful impact that current funding cuts might have. Toward this end, we have built a [fedscifund github package](#) and will continue to refine research questions, including the addition of other funding mechanisms, such as USDA and federal funding for agriculture in Iowa. (*Skilled in coding, data analysis, or literature review? [We would love your help!](#)*)
- **d) Social Media storytelling:** Sharing testimonials (e.g., McClintock Letters by scientists, patients stories) or findings from our Data Analytics Project via our Instagram in collaboration with other national and local orgs. (*Great at graphics, video content, or editing and willing to lend us your skills? [Let us know!](#)*)

Aim 2: Raise awareness of current and proposed cuts to science. We are using the same tools – storytelling, data, and grassroots outreach – to inform Iowans about the real-world, local consequences of funding cuts. While we encourage everyone to contact their elected legislators, we are also looking ahead to the 2026 Midterms when Iowans will elect officials to fill *all four U.S. House seats, a U.S. Senate seat currently occupied by Joni Ernst, and an open Governor's seat*. Importantly, we are nonpartisan meaning that we are not aligned with any political party. Our goals are to engage with candidates and elected officials about the importance of science in our communities and why we need to protect it. We also aim to be a trusted source for Iowans about where candidates stand on science-related issues.

How we are doing this:

- **a) Science on the Ballot:** Through [Scientist Network for Advancing Policy](#) (SNAP) and [National Science Policy Network](#) (NSPN), we are launching an Iowa-specific version of the initiative, which will ask science-focused questions to candidates and communicate their stances to Iowans including by publishing responses in local and state media. (*Interested in candidate outreach, question development, or contacting local media? [Reach out—we need you!](#)*)
- **b) Highlighting what we stand to lose:** District 1 (Rep. Miller-Meeks) has projected an economic impact of a loss of [\\$320 million](#) generated and 1,400 jobs if the FY2026 budget passes. District 4 (Rep. Randy Feenstra; includes Ames) is 14th nationally in USDA funding, which is also at risk of being cut in the FY2026 budget.
- **c) Envisioning what we hope to gain:** It is important not only to defend against attacks on science but also to counter with a positive vision for a future with a fully-funded research infrastructure. We will engage Iowans in discussions about the improvements in public health and quality of life that could be gained from committed public investments in science.

Finally, although our short-term focus in the “Strategic Plan” is on the 2026 Midterms elections, the recent and ongoing attacks on science make clear that our **long-term goal** must include a broader shift in our public discourse about science. It is increasingly important to create opportunities for *full community participation and engagement* so that science is seen not as a political tool, but as an ongoing process that we can all participate in and we can all benefit

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from. These two aims of the **Strategic Plan** are works in progress, and we would love your input on how we can reach these goals!

Building our Community

Volunteer with us! We understand there are various forms of activism, and we are committed to building a movement that welcomes everyone. The diversity of skills and ideas that we each bring is what makes up the powerful foundation of Stand Up for Science Iowa. Therefore, we want to provide opportunities to engage with our movement in ways that align with your interests, skills, and favorite flavor(s) of activism. Please tell us about your unique skills and expertise when you [sign up to volunteer](#)! Additionally, we are looking to expand across Iowa. If you have ideas for local organizations to connect with in your area, please let us know!

McClintock Letters/Op-Eds in Support of Science. This newsletter's spotlight op-ed is from Michelle Chen, an MD-PhD student at the University of Iowa, titled "[I am standing up for science because science saves lives](#)" published in the Colorado Sentinel. If you are interested in submitting an op-ed, we still encourage you to write and submit a piece to your local newspaper! The most important thing is that our voices are heard!

TL;DR ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS NEWSLETTER

1. Volunteer with us! We really need more help to keep our local movement going. If you would like us by organizing events, helping with Science on the Ballot, making social media videos and graphics, or coding for our data analytics project, fill out our volunteer form [HERE](#) and we will be in touch!
2. Support the brave staff across federal agencies speaking out against the Administration's harmful policies. Read their Dissents and sign in support!
 - a. NASA: The NASA Voyager Declaration - [HERE](#)!
 - b. EPA: Declaration of Dissent - [HERE](#)!
 - c. NIH: Bethesda Declaration - [HERE](#)!
3. We are still encouraging scientists to consider writing an op-ed to local newspapers towards the [Science Homecoming](#) efforts! Don't know where to start? Check out this [quick tips writing guide](#).

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Policy Updates

As the legislative session has concluded, the "State Legislation" portion of our newsletter will be paused until the next session. For a summary of the bills we were following during the 2025 Iowa State Legislative Session, please refer to [our website](#). We will continue to provide other relevant state policy updates affecting science in this section.



Upcoming Events

(You can also view events by subscribing to our [Google Calendar](#))

- Iowa City Farmers Market - Tabling with Food and Water Watch!
 - Date/Time: Saturday, August 2nd from 7:30 AM-noon
 - Location: Chauncey Swan Parking Ramp, Iowa City
 - Details: We will be tabling with our local Food and Water Watch to tell our community about how science and research funding ties into clean water for Iowans and spread the word about policy changes and proposed funding cuts at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Institutes of Health (NIH). *If you would like to help us table, send us an email!*