

Kill the Cuts Campaign

Phonebank Rap

Introduction

On May 2nd, the Trump Administration announced [massive cuts to research funding](#) in its proposed 2026 federal budget. These cuts include a 37% (\$18 billion) cut to the NIH. Since January, tens of thousands of UAW members across the country have already come together to fight back through mass pressure on legislators and the national Kill the Cuts day of action. As a result, academic workers are now working with U.S. Senators Warren, Padilla and Tillis, as well as Representatives Ocasio-Cortez, Lawler, and Carson, to build the Congressional majority in congress necessary to halt cuts to NIH and other agencies.

Members of Congress are deciding right now whether to support this effort by publicly signing on to letters circulating in the House and Senate, which UAW is working to draft with Sens. Warren, Padilla, and Tillis, and Reps. Ocasio-Cortez, Lawler, and Carson. There are two letters in each house.

In the Senate:

- Padilla and Tillis letter on overall NIH funding
- Warren letter on maintaining the indirect costs recovery rate.

In the House:

- Representatives Carson, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker letter on overall NIH funding.
- Representatives Ocasio-Cortez and Lawler letter on maintaining the indirect costs recovery rate.

Higher ed workers members must continue to do everything in our collective power to stop these attacks on research and higher education. **Phone-banking members of Congress to urge them to sign onto these letters is an opportunity to communicate higher ed workers' message directly to those who will have a hand in deciding the fate of Trump's budget** and to give voice to the impact of these cuts on academic workers, scientific research and the broader public

Goal

Move members of Congress to publicly support research funding by signing onto the "Dear Colleague" letters sponsored by Sens. Warren, Padilla, and Tillis and Reps. Ocasio-Cortez, Lawler, Carson, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker.

Step By Step Instructions

1. Find your Congressional Representatives and their phone numbers
 - a. [House](#) and [Senate](#) members in your district
2. Call each of your elected representative and use the rap below as a template script (1 House, 2 Senate)
 - a. You can use these resources as a reference for how much funding from these

institutions impacts your districts

- i. [NIH Funding by Congressional District/State](#)
- ii. [NSF Funding by State](#)
3. Send your electeds an email using this [template](#).
4. Call researchers within your own network and ask them to contact their electeds as well, especially if they're from [these strategic targets](#). Share this phonebank rap with them to start making calls.
5. Fill out this [debrief](#) form so we know which representatives were contacted today

Rap/Script Template (Short)

Hello, my name is [name], and I'm a [job title] at [institution].

May I speak with a legislative staffer for labor or higher education in [REPRESENTATIVE'S] office?

→If you are a constituent, provide your zip code.

I am calling regarding my extreme concern about the Trump Administration's proposal to cut billions to federal research funding at the NIH, NSF, and other research funding agencies.

These drastic cuts in research threaten to shut down promising medical breakthroughs, slam the brakes on clinical trials, destroy jobs, and devastate the economy in our state. It is vital to continue the long-standing bipartisan support in Congress for NIH funding.

This issue affects the livelihoods of many people in your district as well as having outsize impact on public health and our state's economy. It also affects me personally. [One sentence here about you and how you are affected].

[If talking to a Senator] To show your support for lifesaving research, I urge you to sign onto the Dear Colleague letters currently being circulated by Senators Warren, Padilla, and Tillis championing NIH funding.

[If talking to a Congressperson] To show your support for lifesaving research, I urge you to sign onto the Dear Colleague letters currently being circulated by Representatives Ocasio-Cortez, Carson, Lawler, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker championing NIH funding.

Rap/Script Template for Calling Other Researchers

Intro:

Hi, is this [name]? My name is [name], I'm a [position] at [institution/affiliation] and I'm calling other academic workers about the ongoing threats to federal funding for science and higher education. How are you doing today?

Provide context:

Great! I'm reaching out because you previously signed up to get involved in the campaign led by UAW, HELU and AAUP to support federal research funding. .

Agitate (Pick one or two questions that seem most relevant to person being called):

- 1. Have you heard about the Trump Administration's latest proposal to cut federal funding for research?**
 - a. Last week, Trump proposed a 37% cut to NIH funding for Fiscal Year 2026. He also proposed cutting NSF funding by 50%, ending all federal spending on climate and ecological research, and eliminating the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. What do you think about that?
- 2. How do you think these cuts are going to affect your job?**
 - a. What do you think would happen if funding that supports your program is eliminated?
- 3. What are people in your lab/department/program/job saying about cuts to funding?**
 - a. Do you have any grants that are frozen or held up in review?
 - b. Have you heard about any offices with hiring freezes or budget cuts?

Move to action, make ask:

Right now, members of Congress are deciding what they will prioritize in the federal budget, and we must do everything in our collective power to ensure they prioritize research funding.

We're asking every elected to show their support for NIH funding publicly by signing on to letters circulating in the House and Senate, which UAW and other unions are working to draft with Sens. Warren, Padilla, and Tillis, and Reps. Ocasio-Cortez, Lawler, and Carson.

Can you take a few minutes today to call your electeds and ask them to support NIH funding by signing these letters? I have some materials I can share to help you do that.

[If YES] Great! Thank you! I will send you talking points and a script to work off of as well as the contact information for your Representatives.

[If NO] No worries! Have a good day!

[If Maybe] Phone-banking members of congress to urge them to sign onto these letters is an opportunity to communicate academic workers' message directly to those who will have a hand

in deciding the fate of Trump's budget and to give voice to the impact of these cuts on academic workers, scientific research and the broader public.

[Wants to know more about the letters] There are two letters in each house.

In the Senate:

- Padilla and Tillis letter on overall NIH funding
- Warren letter on maintaining the indirect costs recovery rate.

In the House:

- Representatives Carson, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker letter on overall NIH funding.
- Representatives Ocasio-Cortez and Lawler letter on maintaining the indirect costs recovery rate.

Email Template

If you are not able to get through on the phone, send the following message via email or message portal on the elected's webpage.

Dear [elected's title and name],

My name is [name], and I'm a [job title] at [institution]. I am calling regarding my extreme concern about the Trump Administration's proposal to cut billions to federal research funding at the NIH, NSF, and other research funding agencies.

[If you are a scientific researcher, start by explaining in ONE short sentence your research]. The research my colleagues and I conduct is critical to maintaining our leadership in health and science, but the cuts proposed by the White House pose a serious threat to scientific progress and public health. It is essential that robust federal funding for the NIH and other agencies is maintained so research projects on cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and other critical health issues can continue uninterrupted. Without adequate funding, we will fall behind in the global competition to be on the leading edge of science and the health of the American people is put at further risk.

Not only is this a public health concern, but also an economic one. In the last year alone, our district/state received [\[FIND FUNDING INFO HERE\]](#) dollars in NIH funding alone, not to mention other funds from the NSF and other agencies. These cuts not only put the jobs of researchers in our district at risk, but they stifle scientific innovation which drives economic growth in our state.

[If addressed to a Senator] I urge you to show your support for the NIH and the critical work my colleagues and I perform to bring about medical breakthroughs by signing on to Dear Colleague letters by Senators Padilla, Tillis, and Warren.

[If addressed to a Congressperson] I urge you to show your support for the NIH and the critical work my colleagues and I perform to bring about medical breakthroughs by signing on to Dear Colleague letters by Representatives Ocasio-Cortez, Carson, Lawler, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker.

All best,
[Name]

Rap/Script Template for Calling Electeds (Longer)

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm a [job title] at _____.

May I speak with a legislative staffer for labor or higher education in [REPRESENTATIVE'S] office?

→If you are a constituent, provide your zip code.

I am calling regarding my extreme concern about the recent cuts to federal research funding at the NIH, NSF, and other research-funding agencies.

In recent months, researchers have seen their federally-funded work delayed, disrupted, or outright canceled – setting us back years, if not decades, in finding answers to essential scientific questions and identifying cutting-edge cures and treatments.

On May 2nd, the White House released a proposed federal budget for the 2026 Fiscal Year that slashes the NIH and NSF budgets and limits indirect costs, which are essential to supporting the facilities and administrative efforts that make research possible.

These changes would be devastating if implemented. Without a functional and well-funded structure for providing research grants, the American research infrastructure will crumble. Further, this would cripple the public university system, destabilizing higher education as a whole.

→Briefly explain how loss of funding impacts you. Personalize as much as possible. Use “I” statements.

[If you are a scientific researcher, start by explaining in ONE short sentence your research]. The research my colleagues and I conduct is critical to...

→Pick a few or use your own

- maintaining our leadership in health and science
- expanding the bounds of current knowledge on [topic]
- understanding [disease]
- combatting [problem]
- scientific progress
- public health

... but the current restrictions pose a serious threat to both my livelihood and my research.

It is essential that these restrictions are reversed so research projects on [examples: cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's] and other critical issues can continue uninterrupted. These cuts will permanently damage American research. They will slow or eliminate progress on essential research, cause us to fall behind in the global competition to be on the leading edge of science, and put the health of the American people at further risk.

Not only is this a public health concern, but it is also an economic one. Beyond damaging American research, cuts to these agencies will have immediate effects on American jobs. In the last year alone, our district/state received [FIND FUNDING INFO HERE] dollars in NIH funding alone, not to mention other funds from the NSF and other agencies. Your constituents, including me, rely on that funding to pay our rent and feed our children.

Furthermore, federal funding for scientific research is an investment in future economic growth. Every dollar invested in the NIH produces \$2.56 in economic activity for our country. Restrictions on funding for scientific research not only put the jobs of researchers in our district at risk, but they stifle scientific innovation which drives economic growth in our state.

In the 2026 budget, it is critical that robust funding for the NIH and NSF remains a bipartisan priority and it is vital that the 2026 appropriations bill maintains protections against one-size-fits-all attempts to cut or cap indirect cost rates for institutions of higher education.

To show your support for lifesaving research, I urge you to sign onto the Dear Colleague letter in the Senate being circulated by Senator Warren, which protects indirect costs and the letter from Senators Padilla and Tillis which champions NIH funding

Or

...in the House being circulated by Representatives Ocasio-Cortez and Lawler, which protects indirect costs and the letter from Representatives Carson, Fitzpatrick, DelBene, and Smucker championing NIH funding.